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3 senior officers relieved for defying order to cheat

By Fe Zamora, Julie Lobog Javellana and Nicole Puyat

AT LEAST three senior military officers have been either relieved or grounded after they allegedly refused to participate in "special operations" to change the results of the elections, the heaviest hurried from ranking military posts.

CONTINUED A2

Single mother is also mom to dolphins, whales

By Blanche S. Rivera

FOR months Ms Irene and single mother Andrea Bautista, keeping home gone may be avoid the backyard of her apartment in Ilocos City.

Bautista, 26, a veterinarian and a marine biologist, also plays mom to the rehabilitated

BAUTISTA, A2

'We cannot accept a bogus president'

Bro. Eddie launches drive to prove massive cheating

By Ruben Makalintal, Michael Lim Ubac and Delfin T. Mallari Jr., PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

EVEN A man of God has joined the outcry against alleged frauds in last Monday's presidential elections.

Saying he could not accept "a bogus President," evangelist and losing presidential candidate Bro. Eddie Villanueva launched yesterday what he called a nationwide fact-finding exercise dubbed "Operation Ito-Cenatus"—to terrify reports that close to one million Filipinos were unable to vote in the polls.

Villanueva's move coincided with similar efforts by supporters of rival candidate Fernando Poe Jr. of the Koalisyon ng Naghahangad ng Pilipino (KNP) to discredit the May 10 elections as a fraud.

Although an exit poll has reportedly pointed to President Macapagal-Arroyo as the likely winner, none of his four opponents has conceded defeat in the hotly contested presidential race.

And only one of them—Sen. Panfilo Lacson—has accepted her offer of reconciliation.

Aliyanza ng Tag-Ani standard-bearer Raul Roco, fielding badly—like Lacson and Villanueva—in the unofficial count has dismissed the elections as a "total process." Roco said votes were bought for as much as P1,000 each.

FULL COVERAGE, A2

"EACH other's champion," declares President Macapagal-during a victory party at the Palace for the Philippine's pride, Manny Pacquiao. The President proclaims him a champion and supports his protest filed before the Manila State Athletic Commission.

KNP presents 'positive proof' of poll fraud

By Cynthia Pabico

THE KOALISYON ng Naghahangad ng Pilipino cannot believe that no one voted for its standard-bearer, movie star Fernando Poe Jr., in certain municipalities.

"This is proof positive of cheating in this election," KNP senatorial candidate Francisco Tatad said yesterday.

On Friday KNP mayoral candidate Hindi Ko Gusli Tugo said no election was held in his town of Barira, Maguindanao, which had about 18,000 voters. And yet, Tugo said, nonexistent ballots, totalling 11 President Macapagal-Arroyo being recorded as getting all the votes, and the other presidential candidates, zero.

Tatad yesterday presented more cases in which Ms Macapagal supposedly outscored the votes, blaming her rivals table eggs on their face.

He released copies of the certificates of canvass in Ass. Tomas, Pangasinan, in which Ms Macapagal got 1,475 votes and her closest rival, none. In the vice-presidential contest, the same COC showed that Mr Macapagal's running mate, Sen. Noli de Castro, got 3,041 votes; Poe's running mate, Sen. Loren Legarda, 2,470; Democrito Aquino, 23, and Rodolfo Aga, 3.)

"This is statistically impossible," Tatad said. He cited a 1986 Supreme Court ruling in Lagumbay vs Comelec in which the tribunal ruled that it was statistically improbable for a candidate to

KNP PRESENTS, A2

ELEKSYON 2004

QUICK COUNT (PARTIAL, UNOFFICIAL)

	PRESIDENT	VOTES
1	MACAPAGAL-Arroyo, Gloria	1,163,718
2	POE, Fernando Jr.	1,001,700
3	LACSON, Panfilo	680,044
4	VILLANUEVA, Eduardo	282,687
5	ROCO, Raul	209,483
	VICE PRESIDENT	
1	DE CASTRO, Noli	1,021,076
2	LEGARDA, Loren	1,000,884
3	AQUINO, Democrito	1,000,710
4	TUAZON, Rodolfo	4,815
	SENATOR	
1	ROXAS, Mar Manuel D.	1,013,681
2	REVILLA, Ramon Bong Jr.	1,010,710
3	PANGILINAN, Manuel V.	1,009,000
4	MADRIGAL, Jamby	1,016,707
5	GORDON, Richard	1,014,870
6	LAPUS, Milton	1,010,141
7	CAYETANO, Pia	1,007,000
8	LIM, Alvin	1,001,007
9	TATAD, Francisco	1,000,000
10	BIAZON, Rodolfo	1,000,700
11	LIBOL, Jose	1,000,377
12	MAGSAYSAY, Robert	1,000,000
13	ARROYO, Joseph	1,000,000
14	LAPID, Manuel	1,000,000
15	OSMEÑA, John Henry	1,000,000
16	MENDOZA, Ruben	1,000,000
17	ZAMORA, Edgardo	1,000,000
18	PANGANIBAN, Florin	1,000,000
19	TUAZON, Francisco	1,000,000
20	ARROYO, Mike Sonny	1,000,000
21	TUAZON, Rodolfo Jr.	1,000,000

GMA pads lead on votes from her bailiwicks

By Cynthia D. Balana and Marvin P. Mottil

MALABANGBAR of ballies from President Macapagal-Arroyo's bailiwicks in the Visayas yesterday gave her a big lead over Fernando Poe Jr. despite the movie idol's strong showing in most of the region.

The partial and unofficial tally by the National Citizens' Movement for Free Elections as of 4 p.m. showed Ms Macapagal leading De Kastilyon ng Naghahangad Filipino (KNP) standard-bearer by 220,439 votes. Her votes hit 2,136,238, and Poe's, 1,915,780.

Senator-president, Sen. Noli de Castro, Ms Macapagal's running mate, was also ahead of the KNP's Sen. Loren Legarda by 274,642 votes. De Castro led in region where Ms Macapagal was strong; Legarda topped the votes in regions where she was ahead.

The figures came from 27,277 precincts, or 37.55 percent of the

GMA PADS, A2

GMA on Pacquiao: We're both champs

By Juliet Labog-Javellana

FOR someone who has been behaving like a winner, the quiz was probably hard to resist.

"We are each other's champion!" a beaming President Macapagal-Arroyo exclaimed as she raised Manny Pacquiao's hand during a "victory party" she tendered for the boxer yesterday in Malacañang.

Mr Macapagal, who is leading actor Fernando Poe Jr. in the quick count of the National Citizens' Movement for Free Elections, said she would support Pacquiao's protest against the outcome of his fight last week with Mexican Juan Manuel Marquez.

The fight, held in the United States, ended in a draw.

Mr Macapagal also thanked Pacquiao, who holds the King Magazine featherweight championship, for supporting her during her campaign in the past few years.

"For you, Manny congratulations," she said. "You are a champion, and we believe in your second championship. And we believe and we pray that you will win in your protest."

According to Ms Macapagal, Pacquiao remains the champion for Filipinos here and abroad.

"I want to say, now that you're here, that we are not only praying for the result of the

GMA ON, A2

BEGINNING MIGUNE: The National Board of Canvassers for the senatorial and party-list elections headed by Comelec Chair Benjamin Abalos (center) is convened on Saturday at the PICC. The first certificate of canvass contains the results of the elections voting in Cambodia.

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER
SUNDAY, MAY 16, 2004

WEATHER FORECAST

Second **FRONTPAGE**

US detains, deports ex-MNLF exec

By Jeffrey M. Tupas
INQUIRER Mindanao Bureau

KIDAPAWAN CITY—He was invited by the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights to conferences in Washington D.C. and New York but he never made it. Instead, he was detained in Los Angeles for 24 hours and then sent back to the Philippines.

Muslim scholar Ahmad Ajrul Lingga, former senator's general of the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF), arrived in the United States on May 12 (US time) but never got past immigration. During his 24-hour detention, he was not allowed to make phone calls.

But even the US official who had invited him to the conference was aware that the problem was in the custody of US authorities, said Lingga's wife, Jo.

Salamca rules were supposed to push him up upon his arrival were also investigated for ad hoc.

Jo said the FBI only learned of Lingga's detention after the e-mailed Eugene Martin of the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) who had invited Lingga to the conferences scheduled from May 13 to 20.

"The [Martin] was very apologetic. He said he did not expect any of these difficulties and promised to work hard to arrange everything," Jo said.

The Inquirer learned that Lingga was denied a US visa when he first asked for one to attend the conferences. Later, the US Embassy in Manila called him up and then granted him a visa.

Lingga arrived yesterday morning at the Ninoy International Airport in Manila and flew immediately to Cotabato City where his wife and family were waiting for him.

When the Inquirer tried to interview Lingga, he said he was "OK" but refused to comment further on the incident.

Lingga is a professor at the Institute of Bangsamoro Studies in Cotabato City. Jesus Dureza is a dignified intellectual by colleagues. He was behind the creation of the Muslim Alliance in 1985.

In 1996, he organized and chaired the Bangsamoro People's Consultative Assembly (BPCA). He also inspired the organization of the group Mavadeka, an Islamic democratic political organization. He was involved in various peace negotiations between the government and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF).

Bob Alonto, also a professor at the Islamic school, condemned the incident and said they will ask the UN to act on it.

Alonto said that what happened to Lingga was proof that the US sees "a racist, paranoid country set to discriminate against every Muslim who comes to enter its territories.

"We protest the shabby and unfair treatment of Professor Lingga. It's more than the country which calls itself the bastion of democracy and human rights can really exercise human rights," Alonto said.

"The US is punishing Every Muslim they see is a terrorist. The US is discouraging a closed-door society," he added.

Only good intent behind overtures—GMA

By Juliet Labog-Javellana and Michael Lim Ubac

[illegible] has made the first move, but don't get her wrong.

President Macapagal-Arroyo insists she is not losing presumption what she made peace overtures to her rivals in the presidential elections.

Mrs Macapagal, who is leading over opposition rivals in 5 hours' Pulsmatch Dec 21 in the National Citizens' Movement for Free Elections' partial and unofficial count of presidential votes, hopes her opponents would join her in a unity government.

"We do not just want for them. We make the first move and hope that they respond," Mrs Macapagal said the other night on the television talk show "Impact."

The President has talked to presidential candidate Sen. Panfilo Lacson about her offer during a blitz on the eve of the election, and Raul Roco, another contender, has reportedly received feelers from the Palace about unity talks. Lines of communication also remain open by evangelist Eddie Villanueva, according to her aides.

Mrs Macapagal said the election was an opportunity to "bring about" real change" for the country. It was for this reason that she offered to underwrite a "government of national unity and reconciliation," she said.

"I think it would be good to have my rivals or their representatives join me in this government of national unity and reconciliation. I would love to have their keen and brightness and most honest leader together working for the common good," she said.

Administrator Sen. Aquilino Pimentel Jr., however, described the talks as "premature." Although she may have good intentions Pimentel said Mrs Macapagal's move was a "misplaced" because the presidential race was still unresolved.

100 Pinoys set to leave Iraq

By Juliet Labog-Javellana

[illegible] Filipino workers are scheduled to leave Iraq for home as violence continues to escalate in the war-torn country with two Filipino guards injured in the latest attack on the local headquarters of the US-led coalition.

Italian Forces and Filipino security guards in the compound in Nasariyah yesterday fought militiamen believed to be loyal to radical cleric Muqtada al-Sadr. The two Filipinos, who were not identified, were wounded by shrapnel but are not in serious condition, according to an Associated Press report.

President Macapagal-Arroyo approved the recommendation of Ambassador Nida Catalla, head of the Iraq Team, for the "voluntary repatriation" of the Filipinos. Catalla described the security situation of Filipinos in Iraq as "fluid to volatile." He said voluntary repatriation could be undertaken in Mosul, Babak, Tikrit, Al Hillah and Al Samarah.

The President also lauded Catalla's proposal to lean the deployment of Filipinos [illegible] to work in Jordan in Iraq.

She had said earlier that she would order a force [illegible] of Catalla recommended it, but he had not done so.

But while the government was assisting workers who want to come home, Malacañang said it was important to maintain good relations with foreign employers. With an AP report

Dindo gets stronger

TROPICAL STORM "Dindo" was forecast to eventually turn a typhoon last night as it drew closer to Eastern Visayas, according to the weather bureau.

Storm signal no. 1 was in effect over Leyte province, Biliran Island, the Surigao and Agusan provinces as of 4 p.m. yesterday, when Dindo's center was clocked 300 km east of Surigao City.

Dindo was moving in a west-northwest direction at 11 kph, with sustained winds of 110 kph near the center and gustiness of up to 140 kph.

By this afternoon, it is expected to be 140 km east of Guiuan, Eastern Samar, Mr. Cordova.

TRAVEL

Lito Rosario A. Carvallana

Villa with a view

Text and photos by Elizabeth Lulu-go
Contributor

WHAT could be worth a journey of 10-and-a-half hours by land and 45 minutes by sea? For divers, the allure of Ticao to Masbate lies in the sightings of manta rays and various kinds of sharks. For non-divers like myself, the veranda of Villa Alta Mar ("view [of the] high sea" in Spanish) is more than sufficient. Up there I spent hours gazing out, beyond the line of coconut trees, to the intense blue of Ticao Pass where the waters of Cotnus Sea and the Pacific converge.

The hexagonal red house of blue-lyn silver-tiles sits on the high-est peak of an 11-hectare estate of rolling terrain that used to be part of a ranch owned by the Buenaventuras. Painted a bright pur-purple, yellow & is a happy, vast coming house visible from shore.

Although Marilyn, born and raised in San Isidro, Masbate, now makes Avala Alabang in Muntinlu-pa City her home, she returns to Ticao every two months or so to su-pervise her country girl's heart. As a child, she had always dreamed of a hut of her own in the middle of a rice field, many lives it all. A nurse by training, she used the boundless she gained from her real estate, property and financing businesses to build her dream house eight years ago.

"It's a labor of love," like the says about how construction materials, antiques and exotic furniture and accessories were brought by truck from Manila, then ferried by boat from Bulan, Sorsogon, to Ticao. Two sightings and other plastic also made the long trip from Los Baños and bus in Legaspi. When the shop still sets not yet ready, a random headed containers of water drawn from a creek in the construction site.

"I wanted a vacation house, a secluded home where I could just sit back and listen to the birds sing," Marilyn says. She hired her brothers. Kennedy to design and build the house that has many windows and sliding doors through which those both abun-dant light and sea breeze in.

The rooms at the back provide views of the coconut grove and se-shore). The front bearing rises to shade lounge, dines and furniture. Three rooms, fragrant bamboo, soft cotton-and-jacquard-like and bilateral bathes bright the tropi-cal grove.

Four a tilapia pond will be es-tablished. Soon-going, Marilyn's ref-ugee brother and secretary of Mata Alta Mar on weekends when he takes a break from his duties as administrator of the Magsaysay Memorial Academy in Manila, intends to set aside space for a vegetable and herbal garden.

Recently there are four-stage shelters, guard, a sleek black horse and evening combos roam-ing the land.

Soon-going nurses puerile when he does without the second afternoon-rise that he has been privileged to witness.

In the mornings, he says, he searches the toilet birds (as called because of their nearly pu-perfect color) and the rare Ma-yon Volcano and the more re-gularly shaped Mt. Balusan are visible past the land-mass of Sor-sogon. At dusk he goes to the back of the house to gaze at the silhouettes of the coconut trees set against a backdrop of a fiery orange sky.

Soon-going says he once saw a flock of herons on a full-moon night flying past the glowing orb in the sky that takes the route to it. "It said that the coconuts in the land are so strong that they can repel a diver's attack and scrap eyes. He guarantees sleeping on the bodies of the manta-s and sharks.

A few nautical miles from Ticao is Donsol in Sorsogon, famed for the gentle-hearted whale sharks. But while this be-coming even the sighted be only a few months of the year, the ocean is out all year round. According to Soon-going, their sightings de-pend on the tide. On the tide, the season, the wind and the presence of plankton.

Be sure that the seas blue wa-ters in the reef are clear and clean, and there are still lots on-ish. There despite the landsat-ed incidences of dynamite fishing. In other parts of Ticao Pass, a bed that the Albanyo siblings have condemned and fulmed on the non-presence of the Coast Guard and other authorities. The inter-estary is a prohibition in Ticao Is-land, but Soon-going says the Ho-ne People's heap does not believe with divers.

In the evening, what I liked most was sitting on the veranda under the glow of a half moon while Soon-going, Mar-lyn's 6-year-old Alexis Jo and Pasying Dio-mido sang Filipino ballads and patriotic songs a capella. Then re-paired to the dining room for din-ner by old-fashioned gasera (gas lamp).

As Marilyn put it, "Here you cleanse your lungs with fresh air, and your lungs with fresh pure."

Foreign visitors who have dis-covered the real house are unani-mous in their acclaim.

An Australian member of the peacekeeping force in Bosnia said: "This scenery will never be erased from my memory." The same fellow expatriate a month in Boracay before he spent a few days in Ticao. He complained that the resort areas on Aklan was "too crowded and commercial-ized" while his time in Masbate was regrettably limited.

A Frenchwoman thought that she and her husband would just be billeted in a hotel. When they got wise "a magnificent villa with a view of the sea."

All were pleased with the clean bathrooms, good food and great views.

For reservations, call (063-8054-951 or 807-2192. Those is-land are best reached by air through Legaspi City in Albay. Book for the pair of Bulan, Sorsogon, to get on a boat to San Antonio or direct to Ticao Alta Mar. By land, take-only of the house in Cubao, Pasay or Ala-bang (but go to Bulan and again take the boat. Or fly to Masbate, Masbate, then take a three-hour boat ride to San Jacinto.

HEXAGONAL dream house in Caribbean colors

MONA soaking on the beach

Imagine sitting under the glow of a half moon, lulled by music, and then enjoying dinner by gas lamp

TRAVEL BRIEFS

Australian Bite

FOR can savor the best wines, how the kitchen fa-cilities of the top wines chefs, hotel how classes a made, and taste Australian cuisine through the "the Great Australian Bite" orga-nized by the Culinary Arts Guild in Foundation (CAF).

The culinary tour scheduled on June 5-13, offers a comprehensive itinerary that ranges from big city restaurants to countryside wineries, according to CAF executive director Rosario Paraguyo. Part of the pro-ceeds will go to a scholar-ship fund for CAF scholars.

There will be visits to catering facilities and other venues in Melbourne; wineries, a dairy and "the Great Lodge in the Yarra Val-ley; the William Angliss In-stitute of Tafe, the leader of culinary arts in Australia; Country Victoria, including Daylesford and Stonyrigg Hill; and the Queen Victoria Market for food sampling and beer tasting.

Slots are limited; early reservation is advised. Call the CAF at 926-8167 or e-mail cafdance@info.com. Or visit the Culinary Store at the mezzanine level, Cam-pus Center, on 2007 Katipunan Avenue, Loyola Heights, Quezon City.

Vacation in KL

KLM Royal Dutch Airlines recently teamed its top 10 Stopover Tours, together with their companion of choice, to a vacation in Kuala Lumpur on the oc-tion's Five KL Business Class.

They enjoyed free accom-modations and a tour of the Malaysian capital topped by a dinner at the Seafood Seri Melaya in the world famous KL Tower. Known for the breath-taking views it provides, the restaurant rotates 360 degrees at the height of over 400 metres above the ground.

"This is our way of saying thank you to our frequent Flyers who continue to support us and provide valued relation through high quality service," said KLM sales manager Jose Leonardo Jr.

KLM flies five times weekly from Manila to Europe. Its desti-nations open the Caribbean, Africa, the Middle East and Cen-tral, South and North America.

Summer special

AT PIM Lifestyle Manage-ment Inc. is offering a summer special until the end of May boy sun, take sun tour packages and special discounts for prospective buyers of the exclusive Pan-dacan Leisure Resort in Silang, Cavite.

The tour packages, inclusive of accommodation, round-trip trans-fers, breakfast and guided tours, are for three days and two nights in Bantay, Ilocos, Tagaytay, Bicol and other nuclear destinations.

Other tour packages for Bora-cay, Subic, Palawan and Cebu are also available at discounts on published rates.

The 53-hectare Pandacan Leisure Resort is just three an hour away from Makati City. It features theme gardens, a campsite, a demo nursery, a vegetable garden, a chil-house and a commercial area.

At PIM is also engaged in the sale of lots, units, lots, townhouses, condominium units and com-mercial buildings to beach homes, leisure and farm estates and coun-try club or golf shares. It offers as well land acquisition and re-views, real estate/property manage-ment and facilitation of special tourist retirees' visas.

For inquiries, call 820-3326, 820-8741 or (0917-397-1890), or e-mail marketing@pandacanresort.com or realestate@pimcorplan.com.ph.

SOLITARY horse in coconut grove

HAMMOCK for landlubbers

KNP presents 'positive proof' of poll fraud

Front page A1

per 100 votes in a particular area.

The situation is worse in Maguindanao, according to Nasol.

He said that aside from Barzo, the towns of Ampatuan and Datu Piang also had no elections on May 10 but the Macapagal got from their 9,202 and 17,000 votes, respectively, and Poe and the other president-aspirants, none.

He also said COCs showed Mr. Macapagal winning overwhelmingly over Poe in the Maguindanao towns of Mamasapano, Shariff Aguak, Datu Abdullah Sangki, Datu Unsay and Datu Saudi-Ampatuan, where, he said, no elections were held.

Quoting reports from BSP field offices, Tanad listed the following voting results for Mr. Macapagal and Poe, respectively: 113,192 and 10 in Mamasapano; 20,754 and 0 in Shariff Aguak; 41,040 and 39 in Datu Abdullah Sangki; 7,000 and 46 in Datu Unsay; and 6,044 and 13 in Datu Saudi-Ampatuan.

The BSP also presented sworn statements from its watchers in the three Maguindanao towns saying that when they reported for duty at their precincts, they were told by unidentified armed men to go home.

"We are documenting everything we can document. We will present every instance of fraud," Tanad said.

'Dagdag-bawas'

The BSP also requested alleged cases of alleged "dagdag-bawas" (adding and shaving) in other provinces.

Ito Nueva Ecija, BSP provincial council Dinen Bautista reported on Friday an alleged case in Cuyapo City wherein the 28,000 votes for Poe were made to appear in the statement of votes (SOV) as 19,013.

On the other hand, the 8,886 votes for Mr. Macapagal were made to appear as 18,886, he said.

Bautista said it was BSP watcher Ella Jacobo who alerted him to the unusual figures in 36 of the 74 SOVs in Cuyapo.

The BSPs outside tabulated votes from the precincts, which are then transferred to the official canvass form. Each SOV contains tabulated votes from all precincts in the municipality.

Bautista said the questioned SOVs have the serial numbers 00800 to 00815.

Jerry Bacnotan, lawyer of KNP reinforcer candidate Sen. Aquilino Pimentel Jr., decried the alleged shaving of at least 5,433 votes from his client and the supposed padding of at least 25,000 votes for administration senatorial candidate Mamad Ikang S.

He said these took place in the towns of Bansalan and San Simon, respectively, in Pampanga.

"There are many anomalies and we are preparing the affidavits for criminal complaints against the municipal election officers," Bacnotan told the reporters at the Teachers Education Center in San Fernando, where the provincial canvassing is being held.

Allan Sitoza, witness of the National Citizens' Movement for Free Elections in the provincial board of canvassers, recorded the two incidents in his report to Sen. Gulang, Standard-Pampanga chair.

Sitoza said these were noted during the canvassing on Friday night. The board is made up of the provincial election supervisor, the provincial prosecutor and the Department of Education division superintendent.

"There were discrepancies and errors. We are not making accusations, just reporting the incidents," Sitoza said when sought for confirmation.

Bayan Muna

In Manila, party-list group Bayan Muna also presented alleged examples of dagdag-bawas.

Rep. Satur Ocampo (Bayan Muna) said he discovered that some of its supporters had been killed since the campaign season began on Feb. 22. It said the latest victim, Henry Sudiaan of Compostela, Valley, was slain on Thursday.

Holding the military as the prime suspect, Bayan Muna Representative Ocampo said he is preparing legal action against Defense Secretary Angelo Reyes and Army Chief Gen. Narciso Abaya.

Holding the military as the prime suspect, Bayan Muna Representative Ocampo said he is preparing legal action against Defense Secretary Angelo Reyes and Army Chief Gen. Narciso Abaya.

Satur Ocampo nominee Teddy Casino said the figures would have gone uncontested if not for the efficiency of the group's watchers.

"The problem is, our poll watchers can only cover about 10 percent of all the precincts nationwide," Casino said, suggesting that similar cases might have gone unchecked.

But for all that, according to Dominic, the proponent Bayan Muna-led Sec. Bar includes Kontrapelo Magbanua, Cathedral Bonga Bloso and Anak ng Bayan will gain "six to eight" seats in the House based on precolation surveys and exit polls conducted by the Social Weather Stations.

Arakpatrik

Gilgen Bellaza, Arakpatrik nominee and national chair, likewise disclosed that the group's watchers had documented cases of the known cases in areas in the Luzon provinces of Batangas, Laguna and Nueva, as well as in other towns in Western and Eastern Visayas provinces and in Mindanao.

He said votes were shaved

GMA pads lead . . .

Front page A1

236,382 precincts to be covered by the Standard 4-point count, which consists of 80% the votes.

At the Commission on Elections' national canvass of votes for senatorial candidates and party-list groups, which started yesterday at the newly granted Philippine International Convention Center, the KNP's Alfredo Lim was leading the race for the Senate with 11,066 votes.

But only four of Lim's colleagues in the KNP made it to the top 12—Joggy Bidada, Sen. Aquilino Pimentel Jr., Francisco Tatad and Ernesto Maceda.

For the party-list organizations, Bayan Muna was leading with 61,384 votes, followed by Akbayan, 42,276; Association of Philippine Electric Cooperatives or Apec, 41,802; Bayl, 32,118; and Abagal, 27,783.

The 6 p.m. figures were based on the partial, unofficial results from some 119 almanacs covering Certificates of Canvass (COCs) received yesterday, including the local absentee voting in military and policemen.

The votes came from Cambodia, Laos, The Netherlands, Palau, Brunei, Sweden, Egypt, Oman, Kenya, the local absentee voting in jails, Norway, Uganda, Botswana, Mozambique, Bahrain, South Africa, Australia, Turkey and China.

The 119 COCs represent about 23,000 votes.

Four of the COCs—from the countries of Norway, Uganda, Botswana and Mozambique—contained zero votes because voters did not cast their ballots.

Revilla et al.

According to the tentative canvass, Ramon "Bong" Revilla came in second with 2,731 votes, and former Sen. Miriam Defensor Santiago came in third with 9,210. Both are with the Macapagal-Arroyo coalition.

Estrada, eldest son of ousted President Joseph Estrada, followed with 9,066 votes, former Defense Secretary Orlando Mercado, 8,746; Tatad, 8,069; Tatad, press secretary of then president Ferdinand Marcos, 8,006; Sen. Robert Barbers, 8,426, former Sen. Rodolfo Biazon, 7,964; Sen. Ramon, 8,005; Sen. Rodolfo Biazon, 7,867; Sen. John Osmeña, 7,840; and Ernesto Maceda, 7,494.

The other senatorial candidates who were within striking distance of the "Magic 12" were Pampanga Gov. Lito Lapid with 7,291, former Tourism Secretary Richard Gordon, 6,820, and Pia Aduna Cayetano, 6,763.

Independent candidate Heherson Alvarez, formerly of the ruling Laban-CMD, was No. 15.

Also-rich Central Visayas debutante with 465,297 votes for Mr. Macapagal and only 110,203 votes for Poe.

She overtook Mr. Macapagal by 50,769 votes in the 2 a.m. Sunday tally when the votes from the National Capital Region and Mindanao proved to Bid Mr. Macapagal regained the top slot three hours later.

Mr. Macapagal also overtook Poe in the Ilocos region, but only by a few hundred votes. She was still among to Caraga, Cordillera Autonomous Region and Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao and Ilo-NCR.

But according to a nationwide voter-exit conducted by the Pulse Asia via Manong Pilipinas, PMPI, Poe was leading Mr. Macapagal by 527,756 votes.

The PMPI said in a statement that its tabulation as of 5 p.m. yesterday showed the leading in 26 provinces plus Metro Manila, and Mr. Macapagal leading in 25 provinces.

In the Standard count, tail-ender Emil Boy received the highest number of votes in his region: 8,8- ed with 9,365 votes. Mr. Macapagal trailed him, followed by Poe.

Third place Sen. Panfilo Lacson received 6,05,581 votes, Sen. Edde Villanueva, 342,687 votes, and Sen. 320,465. The bids of Lacson's votes came mainly from Metro Manila and border to Luzon.

Complaint

Sen. and Legarda had earlier complained that Standard was not tabulating the entries from their bailiwicks in Central Luzon and Southern Tagalog despite having received the returns, thereby giving the impression that Mr. Macapagal and Lim were indeed polling away.

Standard national chair Jose Concepcion told the business last night that he had personally looked into the complaints by Legarda and Such personnel in those two regions.

He said that based on his investigation, Poe and Legarda were correct in pointing out that most of the returns from those regions had not been tallied by Standard. But he said this was simply because volunteers still had to use the Standard templates in encoding the tallies.

GMA on Pacquiao . . .

Front page A1

election. I would like to tell you, Manny, that the whole nation is united, praying that you win your protest," she said.

Mr. Macapagal said Pacquiao's victory in his protest filed before the Nevada State Athletic Commission would be a vindication not only for himself but for the Filipino nation as well.

"Manny is really world-class," she gushed. "I remember that when I was preparing my State of the Nation address [in 2003], I talked about the great Filipino workers and I pres Manny as a good example because at that time he had just received his world championship [title]."

The President received Sarangani Representative Manuel Pacquiao at Malacañang's Reception Hall yesterday morning and hosted a simple lunch for him after words.

The latter was accompanied by his manager Bob Arum to pay their respects and sports Ramon Hadsambas.

Cabinet revamp a division of spoils, say Leftists

By Nati Gutierrez, Armand N. Nocum and Julie Lateg-Jacoloza

LEFTIST leaders see the impending Cabinet revamp as the "division of the spoils" among both President Macapagal-Arroyo's major campaign partners and her perceived pro-election critics from the opposition.

Bayan Muna Rep. Satur Ocampo said upcoming new slots in the Cabinet was a ploy for the administration to "pay back debts" to the President's chief endorsers from the business community and the influential Iglesia ni Cristo and El Shaddai religious groups.

Ocampo conceded, though, that such a move was expected of an incumbent who's already "confident she's winning" a fresh mandate.

Teddy Casiño, a Bayan Muna nominee in the party-list polls, said revising vacancies in the Cabinet was a signal to the President's political base "to consolidate election victories."

Bisa opposition Sen. Aquilino Pimentel chided Malacañang for unsweeping a Cabinet revamp when the outcome of the close presidential race with Fernando Poe Jr. was "still uncertain."

There's a "political motive" to the timing, Pimentel said. "Counter-(political) gimmickry."

"She's saying that 'you see I'm sure to win, that's why I can order a revamp.' But she should have done (the revamp) a long time ago," he added.

The President should lash hard into the status of Cabinet members with pending graft cases now that she is pondering the fate of officials who may not share her desire to promote values formation in government, said Presidential Anti-Graft Commissioner and civil society leader Teresita Ledesma.

Ledesma also advised officials with fixed terms to give the president a free hand by resigning if they think they had not been doing their jobs or had failed noticeably at them.

"Ang problema ay ang isang dapat mag-resign ay hindi lalo (The problem is those who should resign are dinging tightly to their posts)," Ledesma told the INQUIRER in telephone interview.

Ledesma did not name any of the officials, but she said civil society groups were unhappy about how the Commission on Elections bungled the May 10 polls.

Comelec officials—although appointed by the President—have fixed terms and can only be removed by impeachment.

But Bibiano, a convenor of the civil society group Kontrapeng Pilipino, said there was nothing to prevent these officials from resigning if only to give their appointing authority a fresh start.

The President had earlier asked all Cabinet members to hand in their courtesy resignations to enable her to form a new team as she approved Sunday for envoys.

Apart from asking Cabinet men to hand in their courtesy resignations, the President also issued an executive order creating the Presidential Commission on Values Formation (PCVF).

The Cabinet men now facing various charges before the Ombudsman and the Sandiganbayan include Public Works Secretary Florante Soriquez and Philippine Ports Authority General Manager Alfonso Cusi.

For her part, the President downplayed the message her sacking all her Cabinet members en masse may have sent.

"I do not want to be presumptuous as to talk about those operational details. I think the important thing now is to unite our people ... behind the electoral, democratic good governance," she said.

Bunye defended the revamp move, saying that many things could happen between now and June 30, when Mr Macapagal's term ends.

Albert raps foreign election observers for negative views

By Jovanie Aning

FOREIGN Affairs Secretary Delia Albert has lashed out at foreign observers who gave negative reviews on the conduct of the May 10 elections.

"Some international election monitors have chosen to sensationalize certain incidents to project the (Philippines as) not know how to (do) an election or to try to prove that the elections were not credible," Albert said in a statement.

She did not name names but the DFA cited "the refusing accreditation of the 15-man International Parliamentarians Monitoring Mission who said on Wednesday that they were appalled by the violence and fraud that marked the May 10 exercise.

Albert said that not all international election observers were the same. Some were more experienced and more interested in helping improve elections, she said.

"Although we gave international observers the widest democratic space, we would prefer that their output be more balanced and objective, and not the result of the work of first-time observers," Albert said.

She added that "contrary to what a few international observers claimed, there was recognition in the international community that the recently concluded elections were credible."

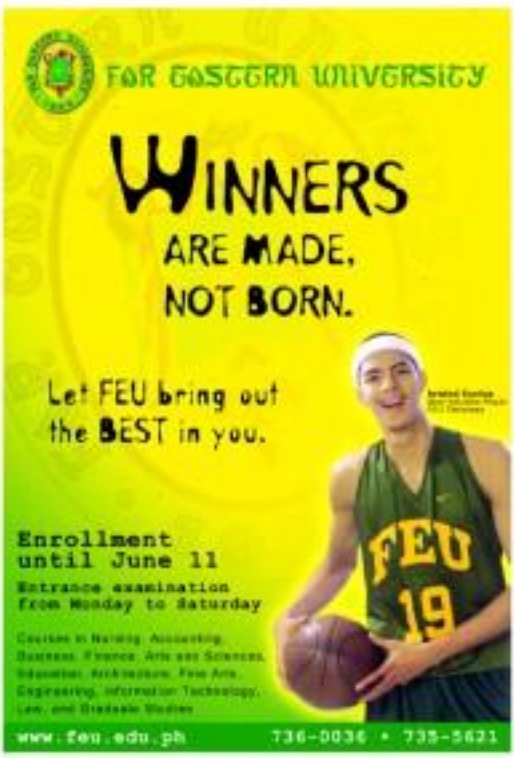
Albert recounted that even in Malaysia, where she is attending the Non-Aligned Movement Ministerial Meeting of the Committee on Palestine, the area "belonged to positive comments from senior officials of several countries."

"In the international community, the unsubstantiated comments of a few observers cannot change the fact that the elections were credible and clean," she said.

She added that the international election monitors she had met in Manila were very professional about their work, although they, too, had some comments. She was thankful that the majority of the international monitors were not first-time observers.

"Those are election observers who truly know how to carry out elections work.

They work quietly and without fanfare. Their interest is to help us improve things, not to accommodate enemy. They are not hungry for public attention," the secretary said.



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By Abigail L. Ho

Oil firms Caltex Philippines Inc. and Pilipinas Shell Petroleum Corp. jacked up at 12:01 p.m. and 6 p.m., respectively, yesterday the prices of their gasoline, diesel and kerosene by 35 per liter and cooking gas by 95 per kilogram.

Now all players Petron Corp. and Flaxonyx Petroleum Corp. will likewise increase the prices of their gasoline, diesel and kerosene by 35 per liter as it is, and at noon today respectively.

Caltex said in a statement the price hike was implemented in response to escalating international prices.

"We had maintained the level of our prices for as long as we could, hoping for a downturn in the global market prices and so as not to burden the public with high prices," a company official said.

"However, international product prices have continued to rise in light of numerous factors, such as the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries' indecision on whether to increase production despite spiraling crude oil prices driven by strong global demand for both crude and fuel products," the official added.

Other oil firms, including refiner Petron Corp., had yet to issue advisories on any price adjustments as press time.

According to data from the Department of Energy, international oil prices hit a 13-year high of $35.39 per barrel on May 13, due mainly to the continuing crisis in Iraq, unbounding economies like China and projected low reserves in the United States.

The benchmark Dubai crude posted an average of $31.46 per barrel in April, $3.33 cents higher than the March average of $28.13 per barrel.

Diesel and unleaded gasoline based on the Mean of Platts Singapore (MOPS) benchmark for finished products likewise soared to historical highs this month.

As of May 13, MOPS-based diesel had a month-to-date average of $41.38 per barrel. MOPS-based gasoline, on the other hand, was at a high $48.75 per barrel.

Unleaded gasoline even hit a historical high of $50.85 per barrel on May 6.

The $48.75 per-barrel May 1-13 average for MOPS-based gasoline represented a $4.63 increase from the April average of $44.12 per barrel. Caltex said this difference translated to an additional cost of P1.64 per liter for the company.

The rise in MOPS-based diesel prices, a difference of $2.26 per barrel from the April average of $62.62 to the May 1-13 average of $47.16, likewise translated into an additional cost of 80 centavos per liter.

This 80 centavos was on top of the P1.35 that the oil firm was not able to recover when MOPS-based diesel prices spiked $4.49 per barrel to $42.62 in April from only $38.42 in March.

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Gloria hails capture of Abu money man

PRESIDENT Macapagal-Arroyo yesterday commended the intelligence unit of the Philippine National Police for the arrest of another Abu Sayyaf member who was allegedly a conduit of funds from Osama bin Laden's al-Qaida network to the homegrown terrorist group.

The President said the arrest of Khair Mundos Mundas, alias Ayman, was another breakthrough in the government's campaign against terrorism.

"Amid the controversies of the moment, our vigilance does not sleep," Ms Macapagal said in a statement.

"I am confident that this most recent arrest will further cripple the Abu Sayyaf and its international terrorist links," the President added.

Defense Secretary Eduardo Ermita, chief of the task force, said Mundas is a courier and treasurer of al-Qaida funds to Abu Sayyaf leader Khadafy Janjalani.

Ermita said the Philippine police tried to "bombing and terrorist activities" of the Abu Sayyaf.

It was the second recent major arrest of terrorist suspects with alleged links to the regional terror ring of the JI.

Arabia Mundos Abdullah, a tailor by trade, in Cotabato City, was arrested on April 3. He was said to have laundered $25,000 from the JI to the Abu Sayyaf. Ashot Avedisyan/AP

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Norway denies plea of Pinoy

OSLO—Norway's Supreme Court has rejected an appeal by a Filipina office against a five-year prison term imposed for failing to help survivors after a Malaysian tanker collided with a Greek tanker off Norway in February.

The ruling means that Jennie Zape—who was in charge of the 170-meter Star Eagle in August 2002 when it rammed the 26-meter Orlando off France's misery coast killing four fishermen—will have to serve his sentence in Norway.

Zape was convicted in March of 2003 of failing to render persons in danger after he failed to stop the Star Eagle following the incident, leaving four survivors from the Orlando to float ocean for more than eight hours until they were rescued.

Zape, who had pleaded not guilty, insisted after his conviction that he did not know the crashed was in trouble. AFP

5 more killed post-polls

By Rosa-May V. de Guzman, ITE
Mindanao Bureau,
and Artha Kira Flendoc, PDI
Northern Luzon Bureau

COTABATO CITY—Four persons were killed in a shootout while ballot boxes were being transported from Columbia town to Isulan in Sultan Kudarat at 5 p.m. yesterday.

Brig. Gen. Aguinis Demanda, 604th Brigade Commander, said it was not known who fired the shots that killed four followers of reelectionist mayor Edwin Hernandez.

Demanda claimed he is wary ahead of his rival Thong Pagka in the hostile and lawless counting.

The incident occurred a day after two M79 grenades exploded near the mayor's house in Barangay Poblacion on Friday evening. Demanda said no one was hurt in the two explosions.

In Basgmol, Mira, a former barangay captain was gunned down on Friday afternoon in the second such attack in the capital town since the May 10 elections.

Police said Amerhaigan, former chair of Barangay Angad, was playing mahjong at his house when two men arrived in a jeep at about 3:15 p.m.

Two of the men alighted and shot Amhaigan with a .45-cal. pistol and an assaults rifle. Police recovered shells of the firearms from the scene.

Amhaigan was the second supporter of losing Basgmol mayoral candidate Dr. Ampuan Adiong to be killed after Monday's polls.

On Thursday, barangay kagawad Tolentino Bulos was gunned down in Barangay Cabalo-an.

Bulos's slain comrade, barangay kagawad Ali Ampatuan, was ambushed after they attended a wake for Adiong Bayle, a kin. Bayle, of reelected Mayor Ma. Zita Sedera Mebh Edwin D. Fernandez, PDI Mindanao Bureau

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We cannot accept a bogus president'

Front page A1

In an interview with the bureau, Roco unequivocally said he would not seek any public position under the next administration.

Asked if he was already conceding defeat, Roco said:

"You cannot concede because there is no winner, and it is unclear as to who is the (real winner)."

The aim of "Operation Be Counted" is to gather the signatures of people who failed to vote because they could not find their names in their precincts.

The evangelist also called for "unity, vigilance and solidarity."

"I would like to tell all those Brother Eddie will not concede until it becomes clear who is really the will of the people," he said.

He said he would not concede defeat unless the "huge and ugly cloud of doubt in the elections" was cleared.

He cited alleged padding of voter's lists, massive vote buying, ballot box stuffing and the "mysterious" power outages during the counting as among the irregularities.

'Dirty system'

Conceding defeat is also very premature while less than 10 percent of the votes has been counted, he said.

Once cases of widespread cheating were documented, "we can cripple this dirty system and institute reforms" he future elections, Villanueva separately said in a press conference in Boston, Bulacan.

An exit poll conducted by the Social Weather Station (SWS) has reportedly showed Ms Macapagal will win by three million votes over Poe, her closest rival.

The SWS also estimated about 900,000 people were unable to vote because of a major foul-up in official voters' lists.

The Macapagal administration has acknowledged there were shortcomings in the elections but said they were not of such a caste as to tarnish the whole process.

On her part, Ms Macapagal, in a television interview on Friday night, urged her political rivals not to cross the line, saying, "They can protest verbally" and within the law. (After see story on *Page A2.*)

Flirting with danger

Communist rebels warned that reports of widescale cheating could ignite another "people power" protest that could bring down the Macapagal administration.

Jose Maria Sison, self-exiled Communist Party of the Philippines founder, said in a statement from the Netherlands that the President was flirting with danger.

"The massive cheating can be like a power movement that is strong enough to topple the Macapagal-Arroyo regime. The regime cannot last long in power against cumulated and growing mass mobilization," Sison said.

Sison also warned that the killings and harassment of progressive party-list members "will adversely affect" the peace talks between the government and the communist-led National Democratic Front.

Mobilizing the masses

The NDF committee said leftist groups "can go into a broad united front" with all parties victimized by poll frauds so that, together, "they can arouse and mobilize the broad masses of the people against the cheating regime."

'Dangerous times'

Roco stressed he had made up his mind to go back to the private sector should his presidential bid fail.

Roco expects that despite reports of massive fraud and violence, the Commission on Elections would declare the real winner in the presidential race.

"It is certain point, (those) are things will get clearer," he said.

Roco warned of "dangerous times" should Comelec fail to declare that the presidency won. Iconoclast: "If the people will not legitimately accept the results, it will have a huge effect on the people."

"But let's not pray for that. It will become clearer, but the result may have a life of its own," he said.

In Cebu City, former Sen. Emilio Osmeña consulted Ms Macapagal was headed for victory but it would be a victory "without honor."

3 senior officers . . .

Front page A1

Two officers—Brig. Gen. Francisco Gudani, commander of the 1st Marine Brigade based in Manoot City, and Navy Capt. Felix Apigo, commander of Task Force 62 in Tawi-tawi—were "pressured off" during the week, while a Marine colonel in Zamboanga was relieved on April 1, the lawyers learned.

Lt. Col. Jamid Lucero and Capt. Crisostomo Malabanan, information chiefs of the Armed Forces and the Philippine Navy, respectively, maintained that Gudani and Apigo were still in their posts.

The Marines colonel in Zamboanga confirmed to the lawyers that he had been relieved of his post for what he said were "well-reasons."

The officer requested that his identity be withheld.

"I don't have a comment officially. I'm not floating rumor," the officer, who had been involved in post-coup attempts, said in a telephone interview.

He refused to talk about other "reasoning" military officials.

"Gudani was just questioned about the death of two civilians during a strafing incident involving the Marines," Lucero said.

"There is no order issued for the relief or grounding of Angue," Malabanan said on his part.

But the Marine headquarters in Fort Bonifacio apparently received a different report.

"Gudani was grounded upon the request of Congressman (Benasing) Macaraeg," said a Marine colonel, who heads a unit in Fort Bonifacio. He asked not to be named.

Macaraeg is allied with President Macapagal-Arroyo.

"Captain Angue will be grounded for a while because he doesn't want to get involved in special operations for the conduct of the elections," another colonel close to Angue said.

Angue was not available for comment.

The source said Tawi-tawi Rep. Sharif Ahaja Jr. is also allied with the administration, "is not comfortable with the presence of Angue."

"Kinausap si Angue, but he opted to be grounded so long," the source said.

The source maintained there was no case against Angue, a seasoned officer who exposed the alleged corruption of his superior officers in Zamboanga City in the 90s.

Angue belongs to Philippine Military Academy class of 1979, the same class that has "adopted" Mr Macapagal as a member.

In Camp Aguinaldo, Armed Forces Chief of Staff Gen. Narciso Abaya has ordered field soldiers and commanders all over the country to ignore a group of retired generals who had been going around Mindanao allegedly to try to persuade commanders not to join in any poll-cheating operation.

The group of retired officers is headed by former AFP Chief of Staff Gen. Jamilo Nazareno and former Army chief Gen. Jaime Delos Santos.

Abaya issued the directive after his unit discovered what they said were "clandestine efforts" of some unscrupulous and disgruntled personalities, including some retired AFP generals and their equivalent in the PNP (Philippine National Police)."

Two weeks ago, a group of retired officers led by Nazareno and Delos Santos said they would go around the country to warn soldiers and field commanders not to participate in alleged cheating and fraud in the elections.

The cheating was supposedly on orders of the AFP leadership and the Arroyo administration.

AFP Public Information Office Chief Lt. Col. Daniel Lucero refused to say if Abaya was ordering the brass-to-brass group, saying only that "Abaya knows what Gen. Abaya is ordering to."

And Malacañang has expressed exasperation over the reported activities of Nazareno's group.

The other day, presidential campaign spokesperson Michael Defensor said the government had been alerted by intelligence officers about the activities of Nazareno's group and warned that the administration would take action.

"The AFP has gathered information from reliable sources which reveals that these retired generals are spreading false claims to the soldiers and to the general public that they have already ended it and gained the support of the CGMF (Chief of Staff of AFP) and the commanders of the major services," Abaya said in a statement released yesterday.

Nazareno and Delos Santos were AFP Chief of Staff and Army chief, respectively, during the term of former President Joseph Estrada.

Abaya stressed that "no such support for whatever purpose contained by these retired generals has been given or will ever be given by the AFP leadership to any group or sector of society with (an) obviously partisan political agenda."

"The AFP will not be a party to commit massive electoral fraud and cheating in the group interests," Abaya said.

He added: "It is also unfair to the men and women of the AFP who have been valiantly and resolutely protecting the integrity of the elections and ensuring peace, risking their lives in the process. A number of them even died while carrying out the constitutional mandate to protect the sanctity of the ballots."

Abaya also said soldiers' soldiers "do take orders only from the established AFP chain of command."

Opposition Sen. Aquilino Pimentel Jr. yesterday said Nazareno was "moving around Mindanao" on his own initiative to persuade military men from taking sides in the electoral contest.

Pimentel slammed Malacañang for insinuating that the former military chief of staff was inciting members of the AFP to join alleged destabilization plots against the Macapagal-Arroyo administration.

"It is true that Nazareno went to Mindanao. But it is baseless and malicious to allege that he is instigating a destabilization plot," said Pimentel.

"Nazareno went to Mindanao to persuade active men in uniform not to take sides in the electoral contest and not to allow themselves to be unwittingly used for partisan political activities or for any attempt to rig the election results."

He said that since Nazareno and his men had long left the military service, "there is nothing wrong if they are to contact with the opposition."

He accused Malacañang of "desperately trying to paint Nazareno as a non-existent power-grab attempt.

"The administration seems to have become paranoid about Gen. Nazareno's presence in Mindanao because he has been quite effective in doing his part neutralizing dagdag-bawas (vote padding and shaving) operations directed against the opposition." With reports from Michael Lim Ubac

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Single mother is also mom to dolphins, whales

Turn to page A1

Tañon Strait – 11 species of cetaceans in danger of losing their home if local governments and coastal communities do not work together.

The Tañon Strait is a 450-square-kilometer body of water that borders Negros Oriental, Negros Occidental and Cebu.

It was declared a protected seascape in 1998 because of the high rate of dolphin sightings in the area, but this status has not spared the waters and its inhabitants from the ill effects of commercial fishing and other harmful human activities.

As project manager of the World Wide Fund for Nature's Tañon Strait Initiative (WWF-TSI), it is Bautista's job to ensure that the home of these gentle creatures is preserved. And in a seascape where half of the 1,400 municipalities are along the coastline, the business of conservation is a mouthful.

"There is always a conflict because fishermen hardly make a living from the waters, so conservation is often the least of their concerns. But we tell them that we are doing this for their future as well as that of their children," Bautista tells the business.

Apart from the local communities and localities, the WWF also reaches out to private individuals and companies who could help with the manpower or generate funds for the project. The WWF-TSI hopes to set up a cetacean sanctuary in Tañon Strait before the project ends in December, but everything depends on the money it gets.

Great show

Last week, Bautista and her staff hosted 31 employees of the Hong Kong and Shanghai Bank for an exposure trip to the strait. She was so confident the dolphins would put on a great show for her guests that she jokingly put up her daughter for stakes if no dolphins were sighted.

After an hour of searching, the guests were treated to a show of friendly dolphins frolicking in their natural habitat.

Bautista's confidence in her 45-kilogram "babies" was a result of a three-year study on marine mammals with the WWF and a year of surveying the Tañon Strait. Since she relocated to Dumaguete City a year ago, Bautista and her team have done research and launched a massive education campaign on marine life in Negros Oriental's 33 coastal towns.

The Tañon Strait had been identified as the first cetacean priority area in the country in the 1990s, but few of the local governments in the surrounding municipalities are aware of, or concerned with its rich biological diversity.

Bautista started out as a volunteer in the WWF training community leaders and village chiefs on how to handle beached whales and dolphins.

Now, her seven-year old daughter Danielle Marie, fondly called Dani, tags along with Bautista in her environmental endeavors. The little girl joins her mom in day long surveys on the island, and is able to identify marine species on sightings her age taken due to wide WWF-volunteer data information drives.

"There's no overtime thing of my job so this the product of discipline but because I exposed her to what I do so she can appreciate my work," says Bautista.

Simple living

Dani used to be very insecure whenever Bautista left town for survey work, and often told her mom to find another job so Bautista would not have to leave the house. Her grandparents took care of her in Los Baños, Laguna where the child enjoyed a comfortable life highlighted by visits to the malls on weekends.

Those days, that would rather take a trip to the twin lakes of Balinsasayao and Danao, or join a hiking expedition at the Silliman Camp with WWF volunteers who sometimes watch over her when Bautista is out of town.

"She has learned to like the simple things in life," Bautista says of her daughter.

The child now understands why they do not use the shower or the toilet paper in their new room, why there are various containers for trash at home, why she is not allowed to doodle on fresh sheets of paper, and why she should advise her classmates against littering.

"Conservation is not a job, it is a way of life," says Bautista. "Our life here has taught my daughter to be responsible for herself and her environment."

Staying put

Being a single mother and sole provider for her daughter does not exactly make things easier for Bautista. It is not unlikely that she is urged by family and friends to find a more stable job for Dani's sake, a suggestion she understandably brushes aside.

"I'm not happy with my economic stability is the be all and end-all of a parent," she maintains.

Bautista also shuns the idea of doing environmental work abroad, as some coworkers have done.

"There is so much to do in this country that it would be an injustice to the environment if you work somewhere else," she says.

(Interested donors to the WWF-TSI project may contact 426-3527 or 09189120786.)

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The WORLD

Editor Lorenzo R. Gonzalez

More Iraqis claim abuse; US troops kill 10 in Najaf

BAGHDAD—US troops in the Iraqi holy city of Najaf killed at least 10 Iraqi militiamen in a six-hour firefight Friday as rebel cleric Moqtada al-Sadr remained defiant and urged his followers to fight on.

The battle in Najaf damaged the golden dome of one of Shiite Islam's most revered shrines.

More Iraqis meanwhile came forward with claims that US soldiers had abused them.

And the United States, Britain, Italy and Japan promised to pull their troops out of Iraq if the interim government to be installed on June 30 asks them to, although US Secretary of State Colin Powell said that was highly unlikely.

"After this interim government to say to us, 'My really think we can handle this on our own and we'd like for all of you now to leave,' we will leave," Powell said after a foreign ministers' meeting of the Group of Eight industrial countries.

"So I'm losing absolutely no sleep thinking that they might ask us to leave during this interim period while we're building up their forces," he added.

White House spokesperson Scott McClellan told reporters accompanying President George W. Bush on a campaign trip in the midwestern state of Wisconsin, "We only envision our forces in places around the world where we are welcome.

"I fully expect coalition forces to continue to be in Iraq at the invitation of a sovereign government on July 1," he said. "If a sovereign Iraqi government did not want us there, we wouldn't be there."

Three other G8 countries, France, Russia and Canada, promised to help rebuild Iraq but said they would not send troops.

The eighth G8 country, Russia, was silent on the question.

US polls showed Bush, just six months from elections, is losing popularity amid mounting US casualties and emerging tales of Iraqi prison abuse at the hands of US troops.

A US Marine was killed in Al-Anbar province west of Baghdad, the coalition said. The 775th soldier to die since the invasion of Iraq in March last year.

The US-led coalition said a hourly US soldier, Specialist Charlie Graner, will face a court-martial over the abuse scandal.

His former commander, who until January was in charge of 30 US prisons in Iraq, said her soldiers, all reservists, had been scapegoated by Pentagon brass.

"I really believe that they looked at the Reserve and National Guard units as expendable. We were going to redeploy and go back to our civilian jobs and our would recover after the accusations," Brig. Gen. Jeon Karpinski told The Washington Post.

Spiegel TV said it had written accounts and documents proving US troops had tortured to death an Iraqi prisoner, 47 year old Assad Abdel Karaem Mohel Jaleel, at the US al Asad military base west of the town Khan Al Baghdadi in January.

Britain's Daily Mirror newspaper fired its editor and apologized for having published photographs supposedly showing British soldiers torturing Iraqi prisoners. The British Ministry of Defense said the pictures would not have been admissible.

(However, British ITV television aired an interview with a soldier who said that he repeatedly saw British troops beat bonded, restrained Iraqi prisoners "for fun."

Meanwhile, a day after US Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld visited Abu Ghraib prison near Baghdad, where most of the abuse took place, fresh allegations of torture and humiliation emerged after 205 inmates were released.

One prisoner alleged two US soldiers had sat in front of him in the camp's hospital ward and another said he saw wires attached to the tongue and genitals of a prisoner. AFP

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Gandhi heading to become India's PM; markets crash

DELHI – Sonia-born Sonia Gandhi scored big broad political support on Friday to become India's next prime minister, but investors panicked at her pivotal alliance with left-wing parties.

Thousands of supporters partied in the street outside Gandhi's home, singing songs, beating drums and showering her with flower petals when she made a brief appearance, celebrating Thursday's shock election win over the ruling Hindu nationalists.

"Sonia, we are with you!" some shouted, as she waved and shook hands. All day, more supporters arrived crammed into tractor-trailers and by car.

Gandhi's Congress won the most seats in the 545-member parliament, but her coalition fell short of a majority and she has had to lobby for new partners, especially the country's left-wing groups.

She has been promised their support. But the country's markets, which set their sentiment Gandhi's big win as a sign of stability, plunged after a day of criticism by key communist leaders of economic reforms — especially plans to sell India's inefficient and unprofitable state firms.

Bombay's benchmark share index crashed more than 6 percent to its weakest close since November and its rupee sinked at a four-and-a-half month low.

Gandhi, however, vowed to push economic reforms on.

"Economic reforms were initiated by the Congress governments ... they were carried forward by Congress governments, so naturally they will be carried forward," Gandhi said in an interview to Indian TV journalists, excerpts of which were released by the BBC.

Congress meets on Saturday to elect a parliamentary leader — effectively the next prime minister — and officials said Gandhi had secured enough support from her coalition allies and from leftist parties for the top job.

With many accepting that Gandhi would be the next prime minister, Incan skilled in her government's economic policy and the contradictions within her alliance that she will have to manage.

"We are not opposed to reforms. But we cannot continue the same reckless policies which have not helped overcome the problems of unemployment and poverty. Agriculture will be a priority area," said left-wing leader D. Raja.

The country's largest communist party, which more than 30 years, she said it would oppose the privatization of profitable state firms and urged the taking of the disinvestment ministry, saying the job could be done by other ministries.

"Clearly, the privatization story is over for now," said C. Jayaram, a director of Batak Mahindra Asset Management. "And the big India story which was popular among foreign investors will lose some of its appeal." But analysts said the reasons sliders — already copying China in states they rule — were unlikely to stall reforms and their consensus were plans promising in increase their bargaining power.

It was Congress which bound India to socialist-style economics for most of the first four decades since independence.

But the party also ushered in wide-reaching reforms over a decade ago and party officials quickly sought to reassure the markets.

"We are not against disinvestment per se if it is chosen as be in (the) national interest," said Congress leader Shamsher Singh, a hero-runner for the finance minister's job.

The world's largest democracy has been stunned by the rise of the Congress win over veteran Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee, who was ousted by disaffected poor angry at missing out on the benefits of India's economic boom. *Reuters*

SONIA Gandhi being presented with flowers by party members. REUTERS

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HAPPY Bridegroom and Crown Prince Frederik after their wedding in Copenhagen. (May 14, outside Copenhagen Cathedral) *Denmark.*

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Danish crown prince exchange vows with Australian commoner

COPENHAGEN – As crowds cheered through the Copenhagen's flag and flowers-filled streets, Denmark's Crown Prince Frederik married Australian commoner Mary Donaldson on Friday, making her the first Australian to join a European royal family.

Mary, wearing a simply cut eggshell-colored wedding gown with a six-meter-long train and a veil worn by both Queen Margrethe II and her mother Ingrid, was walked down the aisle at Kristianskirke Lutheran cathedral by her father John Donaldson.

Frederik, wearing a gala navy uniform covered in medals, who had walked nervously down the aisle a half-hour earlier with his brother Prince Joachim, shed a few tears when he caught sight of his bride-to-be.

After nearly an hour-long ceremony, the happy couple exchanged their vows, and, following Lutheran tradition, clasped hands on their saints.

They did sneak a kiss before leaving the cathedral, however.

Royals from all of Europe and beyond, including the royal families of neighboring Norway and Sweden, Japanese Crown Prince Naruhito, Spanish Crown Prince Felipe and Britain's Prince Edward, were there to welcome Donaldson into their blue-blooded midst.

A number of politicians, including the Icelandic and Finnish heads of state, were also at the cathedral, carrying red and pink roses and candles for the occasion.

The sun peaked through a heavy layer of clouds just as the ceremony ended, lighting up a sea of red-and-white Danish flags interspersed with Australian flags, as Frederik and Mary stepped out of the cathedral as husband and wife.

Police said about 100,000 Danes, Australians and other royal fans had lined the route the couple's horse-drawn carriage then took to the Amalienborg royal palace, where they waved from the balcony and kissed, evoking ecstatic cheers from the crowd below.

From there, the newlyweds were driven to their new home at the Fredensborg palace, about 40 kilometers outside the capital, for the official reception.

In a number of text discussed in majestic golds and reds, the couple and their banquet guests were served shades of shellfish for starters, then roast venison from the royal forests, a veal au-rose with white lentils in parsnips and Bombadin chicken, and finally white chocolate delice for dessert.

Following the meal, Frederik professed his love to Mary once again.

"I love her and I will protect her with all my heart. I will do my best to make her feel at home in her new country," he said.

The reception was expected to conclude with a huge fireworks display late after midnight.

In addition to the flags, huge bouquets sculpted into hearts and crowns have adorned city squares for days, and portraits of the couple were hung in store windows with the caption "Tillykke Frederik og Mary" (Good Luck Frederik and Mary).

Lol, a Dane from the town of Aqir, took the day off work to join the crowds.

"It's a big day for Denmark, for the people, because the monarchy is so important to us. It's ... something special which unifies the country," he said.

Australian Shane Fandall, 26, and Claire Van Rossum, 26, said the wedding was a big event for them too.

"This is Australia's first-ever princess. She's the best thing that ever happened to Australia," Randall said as he and his fiancee made their way toward one of many giant screens placed across the city to give as many people as possible a glimpse of the royal duo.

The union between Frederik and Mary has been qualified as historic, marking not only the first time an Australian joins one of Europe's royal families, but also paving the way for the first Aussie to one day become a European queen.

Frederik, 35, and Mary Elizabeth Donaldson, 32, met in a Sydney bar in September 2000 during the Olympic Games. The Tasmanian pub-or-trading barbour which organized its own celebration as birthplace of the fairy-tale romance.

The pub stayed open until well into Saturday morning as broadcast the nuptials live, and switched its usual menu of pies and Vegemite to Danish meatballs and free Carlsberg beer for anyone with a Danish passport. *AFP*

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

ENTERTAINMENT

Allan Louie C. Corrales

Eddie Mercado needs help

Richard Merk, colleagues sing 'A Song for Eddie'

COMPLEX HOST Mercado undergoes brain surgery to remove a blood clot.

By Paolo Vhal Gaiegale
Contributor

WITHOUT the usual banters that precedes his normal hearing chores, Eddie Mercado, singer, actor, DJ and most of all sportswear rail show host for more than 40 years now was rushed to the hospital last May 4 and soon had to undergo brain surgery for a blood clot.

The delicate operation took four hours, during which doctors had to take away a portion of his skull. Eddie is now in stable condition in the ICU of the Asian Hospital in Alabang, Muntinlupa City, according to his family. But the hospital bills are piling up and his wife Marivic has appealed for help.

One of the very first ones to respond to the appeal is singer and bar owner Richard Merk, who has been helping raise funds for fellow entertainers in need. Richard first met Eddie when he (then 11 years old) joined an amateur singing contest that Eddie was hosting. Now Richard is staging a show on May 26 called "A Song for Eddie Mercado" at his Merk's Bar and Restaurant for the benefit of the iconic host.

Marivic Mercado recalls that last May 4, a Thursday, Eddie was preparing to leave their Pasadena home to host the mixing for season

(Click on it)

Unusually rich and innovative body of work

WE'RE glad that the MTRCB and Showbiz are paying tribute to Peque Gallaga with movie screenings and a panel discussion from May 15 to 23 in Shoebox City and Riley Grip.

The film retrospective includes Gallaga's first solo film, "Oro, Plata, Mata" (before that, he had co-directed "Batch" with Butch Perez).

Other films: "Inang Aswang Unang Hirit" (with Lore Reyes), "Virgin Forest," "Ang Kuko at Mga Ikwalawo" and "Magic Temple" (both with Reyes), "Scorpio Nights," "Unfaithful Wife" and "Gangland."

Also seen are "Oro," "Virgin Forest," "Scorpio Nights" and "Unfaithful Wife." Gallaga once told us that the last film was one of his personal favorites.

Gallaga deserves the special tribute because his body of work as a filmmaker has been unusually rich and innovative. He began appreciating his talent when he was still in theater artist.

Years later, when we were tapped to direct the musical "Evita," we planned to cast Peque as Juan Peron. Unfortunately, the

biggest "battle" for a Gallaga film came when the very controversial "Scorpio Nights" was presented to the Film Ratings Board, of which we were a member.

Right after the screening, it looked like the sexy movie would have a hard time with many board members, who found it too erotic.

But we sensed that the producer had something vital to say about the violent undercurrent of Filipino sexuality, so we helped lobby for a discussion on the film's merits and demerits.

After two long hours, the voyeurs outnumbered its members, and "Scorpio Nights" was able to get an "R" rating from the FRB.

Years later, our support for the film was again vindicated when it was hailed as a modern Filipino movie classic, despite its very daring, and sometimes even shocking, images.

Peque Gallaga is one of our best filmmakers. Let's hope that the retrospective that's being mounted in his honor will energize him to come up with even better movies in the years to come.

FOCUS ON ENTRA WATSON

AS ROGER, resident feminine in the Harry Potter films, Emma Watson has delighted moviegoers with her no-nonsense portrayal. In "Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban," Watson has an even better time because literature has become a teenager.

For the first time, she got to swear jeans, and becomes an even more assertive person. She's determined, knows what she wants, an won't see anybody get it. And she won't let Harry and Ragnet put her down.

She isn't taking nobody from anyone, either.

She stamps out on a teacher, she punches Malfoy and she sometimes gets on people's nerves. Hermione is no longer as pretty perfect as she was in the first Harry Potter movie, and Emma Watson is delighted that she's become much more natural and less predictable.

THE SUBJECT IS PEQUE. Gallaga with Reyes directing Patricia Javier in "Ang Kuko at Mga Ikwalawo"

Movies on TV

ON CINEMAX, May 16 at 11 a.m., "The Diary of Ellen Rimbauer." May 17 at 2 p.m., "Sin." May 18 at 9:15 a.m., "The Bridges at Toko-Ri." May 19 at 11:45 a.m., "Ocean's 11." May 20 at 9:30 p.m., "Accidental Hero." May 21 at 4:45 p.m., "Kuala over Rome."

On HBO, May 16 at 2:20 p.m., "A Beautiful Mind." May 17 at 7:30 p.m., "Naqoyqatsi." May 18 at 3 p.m., "Planet Terror and James Bobbie." May 19 at 6 a.m., "Sexual Behavior." May 20 at 7:15 p.m., "Mission Impossible." May 21 at 1:30 p.m., "Apollo 13."

Filipinos worldwide view GMA network election reports, updates

THROUGHOUT the May 10 elections, GMA Network provided television viewers and radio listeners with comprehensive and accurate reports on the process through the live coverage titled "Halalan 2004."

A historic number of Filipinos worldwide were also able to view updates and the coverage itself live via streaming on the Internet through DQT.net and www.eleksyon2004.com.

Together with its part ners—Jo ino Aquino Gozum and SCMA, GMA Net Media, the Philippine Center for Investigative Journalism, Catholic Media Network, AMA Educational System, InqNet, Smart Communications and PLDT—"Halalan 2004" came up with accurate figures of election results through the AMA Quick Count, according to respondents as being apolitical and unbiased.

In the spirit of public service, GMA Network also presented programs such as the groundbreaking "Bet-data," which latest updated into "Harurot Pro: dotcl," even before the official start of the election season. These programs were meant to educate the voters in choosing the right people for the job.

For the latest in election news, viewers and listeners depended on the country's top news and public affairs hosts—Mel Tiangco, Arnold Clavio, Vicky Morales, Winnie Monsod, Cheryl Cosim, Howie Severino and Mike Enriquez—together with the network's league of reporters.

Eddie Mercado needs help

Turn to page A12

of presidential candidate Sen. Nil Ge Villanueva in Makati when he complained of headache and itchiness all over his body, including his tongue.

"I thought it was an allergy and I was afraid that it could be fatal if not treated immediately," says Marivic, "so I decided to rush him to the nearest hospital."

In the hospital, Eddie was given Benadryl for the suspected allergy, which made him doze off. When Marivic later went to wake him up, she knew right away that something was wrong, for his face was "kind of distorted." She tried patting his cheeks but he was not responding, she says.

Removing the clot

Eddie was moved in the Intensive Hospital, where he underwent a CT scan that finally showed a clot in his nape. The neurosurgeon explained to the Mercado family that there were two ways to get rid of the clot: an angiogram and a clot blaster.

"They tried an angiogram but it didn't work because his arteries were clogged up in his stomach," Marivic explained. "The process involves inserting a tube through the legs to reach the clot. The doctors tried to get it through this, but it got into but could not pass through the neck and reach the clot.

"We were told that if the blood clot was not removed, the brain would definitely swell down, which could do further damage and even be fatal," says Marivic. "So we agreed to let the doctors do a craniotomy." In a craniotomy, a portion of the patient's skull is taken out to prevent swelling of the brain. In Eddie's case, a portion of the side of the skull had to be removed.

P250,000 and counting

According to Marivic, her husband is in stable condition now and has been very responsive throughout his ordeal. But he has to undergo another operation as the surgeons can put back the portion of his skull that was taken out.

This is where Marivic appeals for help. "It would take a long process for Eddie to fully recover and heal," she says, "and so we would like to ask for prayers and financial assistance from kind-hearted individuals."

As of May 12, Eddie's hospital bills already amounted to P250,000 and continue to grow each day.

Marivic is grateful that Arnie Bernardo "has been changing an unbelievably contrary to the notion that it is a very expensive hospital."

"They didn't even ask for a deposit when Eddie was admitted," she says. "All they asked of me was to fill up the form for admission."

Growing friendship

"When I heard that Eddie had surgery, I immediately offered to hold a fund-raising without his wife, "says Richard Black.

Richard first made Eddie's acquaintance when he was 11 and he joined and eventually became champion of the singing contest "Tawag ng Tanghalan," a radio and early TV sensation show sponsored by the day's leading canned milk brand. Eddie was one of the hosts of the show. Their paths would cross from time to time and their friendship grew over the years.

Said for brain surgery, Eddie, 63 and father of three, hosted "Bingo Parade" for the Philippine Amusement and Gaming Corp. (Pagcor). He started by hosting a band concert and dance show in the 1960s with former beauty queen and movie star Josephine Estrada. In the three decades that followed, he was the perennial host of the freshening Filipino beauty pageant. Many of the country's stars and beauty queens have at one time or another been charmed and entertained by Eddie's deft, seamless and graceful emceeing style. The articulate and always dapper man, who is also a music singer, remains one of the best, if not the best, in the beauty field.

Encouraging response

"A benefit for Eddie Mercado," Richard's fund-raising culture, will be held on May 26 at the Hindi Ka Bitin resto-bar-band beer-hall at Greenhills 3 in Makati City. Some of the artists who have confirmed their participation in the show so far are Joey Alcazar, Robert Seña, Vetal Vargas, Dulce, Willie Nepomuceno, Ivy Nicholls, Pinky Marquez, Mon David, Ann Pratts, Ed Picazo, Rinabo Gonzalo, Hajji Alejandro, Lito Calvario and Imperatriz Palma.

"The response from the various people has been encouraging," says Richard. "Even Regie Tafion, who cannot sing because of her position as a court judge, offered to just entertain the guests.

"I know the fund-raising efforts will not be able to entirely cover Eddie's hospital expenses," Richard adds, "but whatever we will be able to raise will hopefully help augment the family's funds for Eddie's hospitalization."

This is not the first time Richard is doing a fund-raiser to help other entertainers. He once helped the family of the late actor-comic Manchit Apostol by auctioning off his guitar. He also staged shows for musical director Tito Fuentes and pianist Jhong Pusoche. And now he's doing it for Eddie Mercado.

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

OPINION

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Rabble-rousing

EDITORIAL

THE OPPOSITION Koalisyon ng Maglakaslakas Pilipino claims that its presidential candidate Fernando Poe Jr. has won the elections. But party leaders don't sound like winners. In fact, they are behaving like losers, accusing the administration of engaging in large-scale electoral fraud and threatening to launch widespread protests, as if President Macapagal-Arroyo and her K-4 coalition had already won the electoral contest.

On Tuesday, the day after the elections, even while the National Movement for Free Elections' quick count had him ahead, the withdrawn Poe camp out of his comfort shell to lash out at the media: "Unalo ka lang panahon, ay bilangan nangyayaring hawi, kapa-ling hawi-dito sa media kabalgkarar (We're leading in the counting but the opposite is being reported in the media)."

That night supporters of Poe marched on Makati's Ayala Avenue in what KNP spokesperson Mike Romero billed as a rally "to denounce the trending process of Malacañang." The next day, Romero backpedaled and said that the Makati rally was "a spontaneous display of exhilaration over the victory in Bikol."

In the days that followed, more serious allegations streamed out with rhythmic regularity from the KNP-Sen. Loren Legarda, the KNP vice-presidential candidate, stunned that even as the party could already see victory, "there are those who are bent on subverting the will of the electorate through fraudulent means." Francisco Tatad, who is bidding for a Senate comeback, charged that the estimated 26 million votes cast in the May 10 elections had been divided among the presidential candidates to make the final count appear credible. Another KNP senatorial aspirant, Amina Rasul, accused soldiers of snatching ballots, barring opposition watchers from witnessing the canvassing of votes, and terrorizing election officials into manipulating vote tabulations. The KNP counted at least 40 incidents of poll manipulation in various parts of the country.

Poe's bosom friend, ousted President Joseph Estrada has rallied for street protests. A group of retired generals aligned with Poe warned that the administration's poll manipulation could trigger another people power.

It is now six days after the elections. By now, the KNP should have a clear idea of the true outcome of the elections. If Poe lost, it must, for the sake of the Filipino people, graciously accept defeat. If Poe won, then by all means, in justice to the Filipino people, the party has the duty to expose, denounce and stop any attempt to rob him of victory. In fact, every citizen—party member or not—has this duty and responsibility to ensure that the true will of the people is reflected in the final count.

But instead of hurling baseless accusations right and left, the leaders of the opposition should present hard evidence to prove them. Up to this point, it seems that they have very little to back up their charges with other than their own suspicions and their belief that Poe could only lose if he was cheated. One party leader has even announced a reward for anyone who could provide hard evidence of cheating by the administration. Is the opposition guided by the rogue policeman's rule which is, shoot first and ask questions later?

The opposition still continues to use Poe's candidacy as a political "tsunami" that would sweep everything out of its way. It refuses to believe that it may have weakened itself to a less than mighty wave, as the pre-election surveys, the exit polls and now the Namfrel quick count have observed. Spurning the findings of more established pollsters like the Social Weather Stations and Pulse Asia, it would rather believe the polls done by an untested polling organization called Probe's whose methods seem suspect, to say the least. In other words, opposition leaders see only what they want to see and believe what they want to believe, especially the myth of Poe's invincibility. They thought they were going to "Da King's" coronation instead of contesting an election.

Poe and his political lieutenants must surely know that given the highly charged political atmosphere that preceded and pervaded the May 10 elections, allegations of fraud and manipulation could serve as a timebomb to a national crisis. The burden now rests with them to prove not only that there was cheating but also that such cheating was done on such a scale as to alter the outcome of the polls and subvert the people's will. In the absence of solid evidence, a charge like that is not just irresponsible. It becomes outright trouble-making and rabble-rousing, an act that is as grievous to the one it purports to condemn.

The speedy administration of justice

SEPARATE OPINION

Isagani A. Cruz

WHEN the reorganized Supreme Court took over from the dismembered high tribunal that imposed martial law, it promised to decide every case submitted for decision (Art. X, Sec. 15, 1987 Constitution) within 24 months from the date of submission. For the Supreme Court, this period is the reglementary period. For litigants, it is the period of extreme frustration.

The justices during that erstwhile period darted out briefs (many that inspired reading) against the Marcos and his ilk for fear of offending the despot and incurring his vengeance. Discretion is thus was the better part of valor, which would deprive them of the generous perquisites they enjoyed as long as they were considered members of the New Society.

Now political considerations are not involved but this was because of the initiative of the Supreme Court. The 1973 Constitution prescribed maximum periods for the decision of cases on all levels of the judiciary, but the high tribunal ruled they were merely directory and thus remained the laziness of the lower courts, and also its own.

Claudio Teehankee did not choose to be intimidated or allured by the Marcos regime and was its nemesis to the bitter end. Often alone, and later joined by Justice Vicente Abad Santos, he dissented against the manipulations of him and colleagues operating the clearly unconstitutional arm of the in-laws Presidents. Teehankee was, during those bleak years, "the bright light in the dark night."

When Chief Justice Enrique M. Fernando resigned in 1988, Senior Associate Justice Teehankee was by general in favor of Justice Pela Melencio in 1985 and Justice Ramon Aquino in 1986. It was only after Edna I. Bautista was appointed Chief Justice of the reorganized Supreme Court was only because of his endorsement of her as one of the nine of his courage in restoring the democratic.

At head of that Court, which consisted originally of only 11 members, Teehankee exercised special efforts to reduce the tremendous number of its undecided cases. The justices met in two divisions on Mondays and Wednesdays and en banc on Tuesdays and Thursdays, nonsession days on Fridays. Most of us worked at home where we remained, although our members had already been increased to the constitutional limit of 15 assisted into three divisions.

Months before his retirement in 1988, Chief Justice Teehankee requested us to double our individual outputs as a birthday present to him. Everyone of us delivered.

I recollect that one of the cases raffled to me was review v. Pacificador, 144 SCRA 446, which started in 1989 and was still lying idle in the Court's dockets when we took over. The solicitor general had moved for its dismissal due to supervening events, and I agreed that this was the logical disposition of the case. Chief Justice Teehankee differed, however. He said that the case involved many constitutional issues that had to be determined as a message to future ministerial governments. He suggested that I write that decision.

Still on I did, laying at the beginning of my ponencia:

"The new Solicitor General has moved to dismiss this petition on the ground that on a recent of supervening events it has become moot and academic. It is true that during the pendency of this case before last in connection with this case, including that of the petitioner himself. The private respondent is now in hiding. The petitioner of suffrage has been defiled and the popular will stymied through a combination of fraud and subterfuge. The court cannot keep silent in the face of these terrible facts. The mission is denied."

The unanimous decision reinstated the due process of law that had been denied Stella Javier who had lost to the private respondent in a municipal-city election and later to the party-list Commission on Elections. As the Supreme Court ended on its petition for certiorari, he was literally murdered. I summed all these in the decision, which Chief Justice Teehankee ordered printed in pamphlet form for wide distribution.

I recounted this incident not for personal vainglory but to emphasize that, as here as we were often told, we took the time to write down important cases that could have been simply dismissed to reduce our caseload. My other reason is to decry that, by contrast, the present Supreme Court seems to be dodging the decision of cases that need to be resolved as soon as possible instead of watching for them to become "moot and academic."

One of these was the disqualification case against Eddie Gil, where the Court seemed a mere spectator, remaining under that enabled him to continue campaigning after he had been declared a nuisance candidate by the Comelec. The issue was mainly formal and could have been simply resolved earlier on the ground of lack of jurisdiction, the respondent not having acted with grave abuse of discretion.

A friend of mine complained that a landslide case begun 11 years ago, which he had won three times in the lower courts, was still pending in the Supreme Court. Considering that a new Justice can have only once a week because of the heavy workload, I suggested that he can decide that case at long last in obedience to the constitutional mandate for the speedy administration of justice.

Peace!

MOMENTS

Fr. Jerry M. Orbos, SVD

I must point out and that I belong to a church that did not sell out, a church that did not embrace the wrong, a church that silenced the voices, a church that vigilantly watched the votes. I stand doubly proud and glad that I belong to a church that fights for democracy whenever needed, that does not wallow in the spoils and rewards of its struggle, a church that does not "sit on the fence" waiting to "support" the winner, any winner. The other churches may have their billions and Cubbies presidents, but I have my peace, that peace which the world cannot give or take away.

Given the uncertainty and tentative situation we are in now, let us not forget that we have a helper, an advocate, a comforter in the person of the Holy Spirit. Whenever situations are not to, let us assiduously pray "Come Holy Spirit! Come Holy Spirit." In line with this, allow me to share with you a prayer I received from an anonymous 76-year-old reader: "Come Holy Spirit, replenish the oppressed within us with your power; the unbeliever within us with your touch; the unsorry within us with a quiet confidence; the fear within us with a strong faith; the bitterness within us with a sweetness of peace; the darkness within us with a gentle light; the coldness within us with a loving warmth; the night within us with your new day." Amen!

"Do not be troubled; do not be afraid." (or the message of Jesus to our comfort and assurance in these troubled times.

As a wish we, Filipino and the nation of ordinary men to triumph for a while, but only for a while. In the end, goodness will emerge victorious; justice will prevail and God will bestow all things beautiful in his time. Throughout all, we must continue to have hope. He must hold on to our belief in fresh starts and new beginnings.

There is life beyond the elections. We must move on and get going. We must not be bogged down by the baggage of the past. Power, in our hands depends a lot, on our ability to let go, said ex-God. We must see the big Picture and not focus on the scandals he's used to hear. We could have learned and the should-have-beens. In the end, believe that in everything that happens, there is a reason, there is a mission. No matter what happens, as long as you are the reason and know the mission, then you can have peace.

While we admit we all may wish our cynicism, let us not forget the abilities who will invest our sons. The way we do policies now will definitely affect their future. The way we live our lives will have a meaning on the quality of their lives. Many of us are so engrossed in being or trying to be in the corner stage that we forget two things: that we will have to make our exit, and that the children will have to make their entrance.

Speaking of children, please help send the Holy Mary the Queen Children's Choir of the Immaculate Conception Cathedral to the Choir Olympics in Bremen, Germany this coming July. Call Emma T. Isidoro at 09173436787 or (02)7274486.

A sentence with the Lord:

Lord, help us to have peace, and use us to be instruments of peace with the help of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Relinquishment, but no formal assumption

REVELLE

Raimundo L. Farolan

LAST Friday, Lt. Gen. Romeo S. Santillan, the 37th commanding general of the Philippine Air Force bade farewell to the organization, ending 36 years of military service. Santillan started his career as a cadet in the Philippine Military Academy, joining the Class of 1970. This former AFP Chief of Staff (Lt. Gen. Rodolfo Garcia) the sole member of the class still on active duty with the Armed Forces. Although the AFP Chief Gen. Narciso Abaya is considered a member of the class, he actually graduated from Area Union with the Class of 1969 and was commissioned with the Engineering corps. He is also a member of this vanishing breed and is due for retirement in December.

Santillan's 29-month stint in commanding general, PAF was remarkable for its aggressive planning effort. Under the Modernization Program, "re-tooling its 32 phases of various types, mostly utility and attack platforms, being procured or flying teams. This program was started out without foreign assistance, using solely government resources. Considering the steadily declining budget allocations for the defense establishment, the PAF leadership was to prize all generals on extended tours of duty. Only when troops become restless and the command loses its cohesiveness and effectiveness.

Santillan's 29-month stint in commanding general, PAF was remarkable for its aggressive planning effort. This is to provide a semblance of continuity of leadership in the organization. To my mind, the only time that precedent was not observed was in February 2001 just after the Erap Estrada fall. Considering the situation then, I was not surprised at Mike Defensor's hasty departure. The continuity of the Air Force, and there was no time for formal ceremonies and speeches to mark the event. One of the few times I was amused by the

...

We all know that General Santillan would be retiring on May 14 this year. Surely no one could have prepared for the change by taking into account the circumstances of the circumstances for the position. The logical contenders were down to the rank of major general (two stars). I did not mean that the logical contenders were down to two stars but rather that the logical contenders were down to two stars but rather that the logical contenders were down to two stars but rather

TALK of the TOWN

Please send feedback to: talkofthetown@inquirer.com.ph

Edited by Juan F. Sarmiento Jr.

Did Comelec bungle the polls?

THE ELECTION process in the country is deeply flawed. Close to a million people, who wanted to vote, were unable to cast their ballots on May 10 because of final spat in the voters' list.

To the consternation of many voters who either revalidated or registered for the first time last year, their names where nowhere to be found in the voters' list on Election Day.

The list itself was padded. The Commission on Elections (Comelec) placed the number of registered voters at 43.8 million, which is said contained the names of the deceased. There were reports that the number of voters in certain areas rose by more than 30 percent over the past three years.

Then the Comelec failed to come up with a computerized voters' list to allow 90-days for inclusions and exclusion proceedings.

More problems arose on Election Day. These included lack or shortage of election paraphernalia, shortage of ballots, defective stamp pads, missing pages in the election return forms, ballot switching and snatching, lack of poll precincts, and the omission of the names of certain candidates.

The ink applied to the nails of the right index fingers of the voters was easy to rub off indelible, suggesting that the Comelec awarded the contract for the indelible ink to the wrong supplier.

The Comelec wasted billions of pesos in taxpayers' money for other contracts. It has yet to recover about P1 billion from a private consortium after the Supreme Court nullified the contract for counting machines. A total of P400 million also went down the drain when the high court prevented the poll body from conducting its own quick.

Maybe it was just a dream

By Rubbin Anus
Governing senator/All Philosophy
Resident of Barangay Barking Sea
to Quezon City

I know Lino, I know my brothers to, and I know a handful of friends know me too. But according to the Comelec, the poll clerks and their master list, we are not registered voters. I was told a lot of people with the same predicament during Election Day to only dump it just out of frustration.

The day before, my brother went on line to check which precinct our family would be voting in. He was able to quickly find our precinct names and their precinct no.'s but when he looked for my application forms to the precinct the next day, hoping that the poll clerks would recognize them as proof that we are registered voters.

Unfortunately, we had no such luck. After sifting through the list of names pasted on the classroom doors, fixing to check if our name was on the "I-Voter list," and showing our applications forms to the volunteers, we were merely informed to the Comelec station in the Quezon City Hall to see if our names were on its list.

Exhausted and frustrated, we went home to take a break before going to the City Hall.

Several TV stations gave the Comelec hotline numbers, so we tried calling to find out what we were supposed to do. As expected, the numbers were always busy.

Disappointing

I went to the City Hall with my relatives to reactivate. The scenery was promptly reminded to us related to to how out the and applications forms photocopied. Many people were already there and the clock mark in the "approved" box of the "For Station of the Board" section of the application form and stamped signatures above the "Chairman" and "member" signatures lines.

We were down the number of a person, which was in the second one seated in the meeting, instructed to to go down and down out signed documents. According to her, an order was already to the "approved" boxes of Comelec approved documents, such as those we had, to vote. Seeing that in the said disappointing election experience coming to a close, we returned to the Barking Sea Elementary School.

Principal

We finally went to the principal of the school, to whom we explained what we found out in the City Hall. She claimed that as long as our names were also on the lists, regardless of the documents we presented, we would not be allowed to vote. She showed us the voters' list board of the entire the avenues in the Comelec station, which was told it was released.

At the end, she wrote down a note to the head of the precinct we were selected to, in which she said that it was up to the head whether she would allow us to vote or not. With a letter issued note, the precinct head wouldn't.

Seeing finality in anywhere we attempt to cast our votes, we left the school and went home, being able to the nothing more than hope that the candidates we would have voted for would win, since couldn't help but go back to Dec. 28 of last year, the day we registered, as should I say the day I thought we registered.

I thought I found myself at the end of a line standing in many seven blocks from the City Hall wall. It other people at 4:30 a.m. until 8 a.m. that day.

Although I remember all the adversaries, only to be told at seven later in that afternoon, I have a faint memory of being informed once a Comelec station, having my picture taken by a computer, and having my fingerprint electronically taken.

Maybe it was just a dream because everyone again I am not a registered voter. At least I wouldn't be having that line be quite awhile, and at least my fingernails are clean.

It did

By Jose Concepcion Jr.
Chair, National Citizen's Movement for Free Elections

THE Commission on Elections finally did the party's elections. Let us review this here.

Number one, the Comelec has the responsibility of making sure that all qualified voters (in COM.) to all political parties and to all voters so that they can review it.

This is important so that those who live in the same communities will know who are the voters there and who are not. They can therefore file exclusion or inclusion proceedings.

However, the deadline on for the CVL was Feb. 10. That was not met. The latest time came was Mayor, the deadline for inclusion and exclusion was not observed. So, how can we file exclusion and exclusion proceedings when the deadline had already lapsed.

The failure of the Comelec to come up with the CVL list on the qualifications on Election Day with some voters not being able to vote.

Number one, the Comelec gave us the Project of Precincts, which lists all the precincts in the country. So, we know the precincts in the country and the registered voters in each precinct. We must this as the basis of our decisions.

However, on election day, we learned that there were problems with the Project of Precincts that they gave us.

The precinct numbers typed in some element were so were not the same with those contained in Project of Precincts. Secondly, our computers rejected those precincts because they might come from "ghost precincts." We had to double-check them first.

Those food-age detained our quick scans, but they are not enough to pin to question the election process.

We have not received any organized issues bearing by any group. Click here by Philip Cesar C. Cabral

We responded to the challenge

By Rosario Cielo Bueta
Chairman/Comm. Commissioner on Elections

YES terms, that question is pregnant with implications, meaning that the Comelec did not do its job and therefore there was no election because when you bungle an election, you have not held one. So it bugs the mind.

But to be candid, I would salute our dignity it with an answer but somehow might mistake that for an admission. We are not willfulness that we bungled the elections.

So with limited time for preparations—because our comprehensive modernization suffered a Waterloo—Phase I, registration and validation system, Phase 2 which is automation but the Supreme Court prohibited us from using the counting machines. Now in Phase 3, with the actual use automated but to use the PSAS (Very Small Aperture Transmission) for electronic transmission we have to resort to manual counting.

And with the decision of the Supreme Court in January (which may) finalized in February. Of quite at an sufficient time to prepare and you know the budget for the Comelec was only released (actually in the middle of March in the amount P1.1 billion.

The 2004 budget was not approved by Congress and the 2003 budget was as usual but there was no budget for the elections in the 2003 budget.

So midterm the release by the Department of Budget and Management of the 2004 budget, we could not bid out the forms and supplies and other documents.

The necessary preparations for manual (electronic) usually take six months. But despite the limited time in the face of these seemingly interminable difficulties and the advanced negative information against the Comelec, we responded to the challenge and held the elections on May 10. Bumps for some isolated precincts, the elections were conducted.

What do you mean by bungling? What are the criteria for determining the issue of bungling or non-bungling?

In what we would like to show here is that elections were held and results are (being) tabulated. And in this sense, we will proclaim the winning candidates.

We have only two kinds of candidates here—the winners who clear and the losers who have been cleared. (Interview by Atty. Ira Edited)

'Madness' in Mandaluyong

By Ester G. Dipsopal
Also Seller
Resident of Barangay Plainview

TWO months ago, I decided to check if my name was on the voters' list in Mandaluyong, home city of Comelec Chair Benjamin Abalos.

So check, but why wasn't I registered?

I asked Ma. Anne Lazarus, a Comelec lawyer, how that was so since I had gone through a "revalidation" procedure on Oct. 15, 2003 for a new voter's ID without "inclusion" which I had helped register in September.

Lazarus was excited about the elections and wanted to vote for the first time. She applied for the new ID on Sept. 8, 2003. Another helper, Felicia, also a first-time voter, filed up for her ID on Oct. 22, 2003. My brother also applied for the new ID that supposedly used the form in question technology, on Oct. 8, 2003. Just like me, he was also unable to vote in 2004.

All three were able to collect their IDs at the barangay office several days before Election Day.

Lazarus looked for my name in the lists, with no success. She told me to call back after she had run through a pile of databases with data on voters who had applied before Dec. 16, 2003.

I called up friends of my sister, friends at the Comelec where she was once the relocation and information director, hoping they would be able to help me find out what went wrong.

Silver Fox

One said I could still be on the master list, but if I had not joined the precinct registration, my name would probably not be there. Another said that I try my luck on E-Day.

After checking all the databases, Lazarus told my name could not be found.

My only hope was in filing as one of the batch they gave me when I had "revalidated" on period. I may have but the copy has I noted that I was told by the city hall that no duplicates was sent to Comelec.

The answers. Since they only had the computer's inputs to go by, it could be the data wasn't entered. The other implication, although she didn't say it, was that I had not "revalidated" correctly.

Another had accompanied me for revalidation, and also to the barangay chief's office a few months many to get a clearance. I have a duplicate of that form. An entry in my diary showed I went to those two appointments on the day. Could I have been imagined it all?

The last word couldn't vote.

Agitated

After hearing me out, albeit conflicting reports that I could take my chance, I showed up on Election Day, with my old voter's ID, company ID, SSS and TIN cards, passport, issues with my address on it—documents that would identify me and voter's card. I was dumped my name on the list for last 26 years.

At the Pedro Cruz Elementary School precinct, I did not find my name on the list, but one of brother's and the canvassers' names. On another list, however, I saw my name with several others who had been "disenfranchised" by failing to receive precinct polls. In my name was there, after all!

Showing my documents, I was directed from one "Assistant-Head" to another to get a box pass with hundreds of similarly result, and now increasingly agitated people, only to be told on empty was same before the Comelec.

At the Mandaluyong gym where complaints were heard, I found a long line looking for names or precincts. I was not alone. Many faced the same predicament all over the country, I found out later.

It would have taken me another two hours to get somehow close to the Comelec people, and I had to give up. I was running out of goodwill and—sure, it was almost 7 p.m., and I was so ready myself for work.

Meanwhile, Ester's name had been posted on her UP Village precinct in Quezon City the night, who had worked on the Comelec's identification campaigns for six years, had passed on in 1998.

A modern electoral fiasco

By Ramon Casipit
Executive Director
Institute for Political and Electoral Reform

THE Comelec handling of the 2004 elections is a continuation of an economic crippling for modernization, the ultimate facing up to the reality of the old-fashioned manual counting and canvassing, and the historical act to continue catching an almost impossible job with an about a time for preparations. It is no wonder that confusion reigned.

Seeing during Election Day showed a magnified problem of disenfranchised voters. Many were not able to find their names, their precincts, or even their polling places. In addition, there were reports of confusion about time pressure on the ground by appointees of electoral lists, and printing errors in the official documents.

It was already late when Comelec wanted the whole process of putting in place the modernized election process as mandated by the Republic Automated Election Law in April 2003, when the contract for the crucial second phase was signed, it was already several months late from the original proposed schedule. In fact, the Comelec took about three and one half months to sign and prohibitive steps in the hands done bidding and approval of contracts, marking hardware, software and skills, to designate implementation of the phases, and posts and stakeholders' assessments of the components of the electoral modernization scheme.

Compared

In the end, all of Comelec's efforts came to nothing when the Supreme Court ruled that the acquisition of the machines for the second phase and later the third phase of the modernization plan. The first phase was implemented but ceased its own problems when it did not cover all requirements and the gathered data cannot be used by any other agency.

Left with no choice, the Comelec reluctantly resorted to the manual methods of elections (even in some of the commissioners still desperately tried to salvage what was left of the modernization plan, particularly the third phase of transmission that called for the use of satellites). With little time left and beginning portions of maintenance and security/data source lines, the Comelec leadership asked an Hitchcock into the election people.

It is to the credit of the career professionals in the Comelec and the voting number—between their herculean efforts—that the elections were held despite the inevitable confusion that appeared in the process. When the going got rough, they took over the logical details that seemed to be done within the very right schedule prescribed by the various laws.

There is no single reason for the whole mess to explain. However, mismanagement of the whole electoral process, particularly in the implementation of the modernization programs, stands out. The program was not well thought out, and several ingredient deals ensued in quality and credibility. The Comelec leadership also refused stubbornly to listen to criticisms and recommendations of various stakeholders, including the relevant non-governmental committees and the information technology community.

The tragedy included the waste of several billions of our people's money during a period of budgetary crisis in a time the project they ultimately benefited. It is also a matter of concern to consider the effect of the Comelec leadership's bungling on the credibility of the crucial 2004 elections. A tragedy may yet turn into a catastrophe.

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Across the NATION

Assistant Editor Tony Bengcayo

Priest, poll workers fear for their lives

By the PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

THE INSIST priest of this town will not be able to hold Mass today, the feast of San Isidro Labrador as he has gone into hiding.

Fr. Jose 'Boy' Villacorta, head of the Parish Pastoral Council for Responsible Voting (PPCRV), together with volunteers of the National Citizens Movement for Free Elections (Namfrel) and PPCRV have gone into hiding after policemen Mayor George Hagilimot allegedly threatened to hunt them.

Villacorta' report to the Namfrel provincial office of vote-anomalies involving the elections in Nasy appeared in the Inquirer's May 13 issue, which reportedly infuriated the mayor.

"When the wife of the mayor read the news, she went out of her house and dared somebody in the crowd, saying, 'Bigat pangit ang pareng iyan (that priest must be killed)'," said Villacorta.

Nasy police chief Insp. Nicolas Conches said he did not know of any threat against Villacorta, nor any problem related to elections in the area, except that supporters of Hagilimot, son Presidente B. Gabalonda, 43, was killed on May 6.

PPCRV Nasipit volunteer coordinator Evelyn Fernandez said that while the counting of votes was in progress on election day Hagilimot had asked him to report to his office and there, the mayor, pointing his left forefinger at him, said: "If something bad happens in the election, I will hunt you."

Eric Subido, Nasipit volunteer, said his group identified at least 19 flying voters in Nasy.

Biliran

In Biliran, Laguna, a fire of still unknown origin hit the ceiling of the town hall's second floor near the counting room, which is a few meters from the canvassing center, at 7 p.m., Friday. It was, however, immediately put out, causing no harm.

The fire occurred when canvassing had resumed at 9 a.m., thereby after it was stopped two and a half hours earlier.

Abel M. Jagmis, election officer of the town, Laguna, told reporters Thursday in substitute for Biliran election officer Teodulfo Demaclar who was missing.

Poll watchers from both camps guarded the ballot boxes in the municipal hall in the days that canvassing resumed.

Demaclar was present in the resumption canvassing on May 10 but reportedly said they would wait for at least 30 ballot boxes to arrive before starting the canvassing.

The canvassing was moved at 9 a.m., May 11, when less than ten ballot boxes arrived. Canvassing took place at 9 a.m. to 11:30 a.m.

Due to evidence the canvassing was stopped and was scheduled for resumption at 2 p.m. but Demaclar did not return, as he was allegedly sick.

After Tuesday he no longer appeared at the municipal hall but Jagmis, the Biliran people, and representatives of the police did not know the exact illness or loca-

(Inquirer, 5/13)

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RACE FOR NO. 1

Board seat key in La Union

By Ga Damaso Ochoa
PDI Northern Luzon Bureau

SAN FERNANDO CITY—The race for the No. 1 seat in the city council or provincial board has been made championed as election experts, but means the world to candidates for the local legislative posts, even in areas where political dynasties still hold sway.

Not only does the No. 1 legislator get to hang the gavel and preside over the legislative sessions in the absence of the vice mayor or vice governor who is the presiding officer, the position augurs success for those who later made politics their career.

In this city, for study for No. 1 councilor has been more heated than that for mayor, vice mayor or even congressman, where incumbent officials predictably won by a landslide over virtually unknown political opponents in the May 10 elections, according to political observers.

At the proclamation on Wednesday, but contenders for No. 1, former board member Pablo Ortega and his nephew Francisco Emmanuel Ortega, topped each other heavily after Pablo edged him out within mere 200 votes.

Incensed by Francisco Emmanuel's father, reelected Rep. Manuel Ortega, had tried the same project but not as much for himself but for his son, the president of the League of Councilors of La Union, to be No. 1, against his own brother, who now holds the second seat in the provincial board, Jonathan Jason Dizon, son of former governor and now ambassador to Bhutan Jovito Dizon, has retained his hold sure the No. 1 post, which he won in the provincial elections as a first-termer.

Observers say his father had also campaigned intensively for his son to get the much coveted post as senior board member, which he himself held from 1988 to 1992.

Usher Jason Jose Joaquin Ortega, the first Filipino-civilian governor of La Union who was appointed in 1901 at the age of 31, started this family's rise to political power.

His two sons, Nemesio "Nesoy" and Joaquin "Tiking," who are now related in among the province's "most illustrious sons," first entered politics as municipal councilors.

EMPOWERMENT Elections are the time to cast judgement on candidates and officials who are seeking the people's mandate and this two Muslim women in Parang, Maguindanao are not to be left out of the process.

ELECTION 2004

Twists, turns in local races

(2,1) and new faces emerge as the counting proceeds and here are some of them.

+Aurora is still "Angara country" as relatives of Sen. Edgardo Angara of the Laban ng Demokratikong Pilipino party dominated the provincial elections. Angara's son, Anto Edgardo, seen as representative of the lone congressional district in the province. Angara's niece, outgoing Rep. Bellaflor Angara-Castillo, will lead the municipal province in the next three years as governor. Dr. Arturo Angara, younger brother of Senator Angara, won as mayor of the capital town of Baler. Jane Edgardo won by 19,592 votes over Nathalie Ong of the Lakas-CMD. This is the biggest margin of victory in Aurora's electoral history, according to Comelec figures.

+Outgoing Batanes Rep. Enrique Garcia won as governor while his son, former Batanes City Mayor Alfred Garcia, won as representative of the second district over outgoing Sen. Leonardo Roman. Another son of the elder Garcia, Jose Enrique Garcia III, lost to Melanie Suntay Jr. in the mayoral race in the capital city of Basingo.

+It's sweet victory for former Mayor Sonia Lorenzo of San Isidro, Nueva Ecija, who is proclaimed winner in the mayoral race in the town. Lorenzo was removed last January when the Commission on Elections declared Nestor Magno winner in the 2001 elections.

+Reelectionist Marian City Mayor Ma. Lourdes Bautista, daughter of former Rep. Rosa Espiritu, lose to Rico Bonoc Caspinto in the mayoral race. The Fajardos ruled Marian City for two decades.

+Sen. ret Barbara Milano Ong's sister Annabel Rancel tops the race for councilor in her native Tabaoma, Bataan Sitja. In Pampanga, veteran actors star Tony Boy Ong (sister Antonio Lazo) to last of five candidates in the fourth congressional district race two.

+In Cauayan, a two-vote lead by a winning mayoral candidate in Cauayan town triggered protest from the camp of her rival on Thursday night. Reelected Mayor Wilma Billano got 5,529 votes while her closest opponent Jose Angelo Dominguez received 5,107 votes. But before the Comelec officially proclaimed Billano as the winner, the lawyer of Dominguez asked for the suspension of the proclamation, saying election results did not reflect precincts were tampered with.

+The Comelec has proclaimed Lipa City Mayor Vilma Santos-Recto (Lakas-CMD) winner on Thursday. Santos got 58,000 votes, while her rival former Lipa city mayor Ruben Dimali (KDP) got 28,000. Santos is now on her third and last term as Lipa city mayor.

+As early as Monday, Oriel-term governor Reynaldo Blandoua (LP), who was unopposed as representative for the second district of Batangas, was proclaimed by the Comelec.

+In Batangas City, the Comelec has proclaimed for today incumbent Mayor Eduardo Dimacuha winner.

+In Puerto Princesa, the Comelec has proclaimed incumbent Mayor Edward S. Hagedorn as the winner.

+Incumbent Cuyapo Rep. Joseph S. Santiago was proclaimed winner in the contest for representative of the province's lone district Friday night.

+In Pulupandan, the nephew and uncle Asumpcion team lost to the group of Luis Illoreta. Illoreta, who was proclaimed winner yesterday, got 8,190 votes over Anthony Jerard Asumpcion's 6,938.

+In Solano, Nueva Vizcaya, a legal question emerged after reelected Mayor Rolando Bartolo, who was proclaimed on Thursday, died in a heart attack on Friday morning.

+In Gil Bagabon, Alfonso Gamboa was proclaimed mayor, while David Larson won as vice mayor.

+In San Enrique, proclaimed at 6 p.m. Wednesday were reelectionist Mayor Alvin Wechsler and his running mate Ma. Victoria de los Santos.

PDI Northern Luzon Bureau: Bel Magenau, Ronnie O. Reyes, Ronnie Lovejo and Geraldford Viola; PDI Southern Luzon Bureau: Carla B Rivera, PDI Visayas Bureau:

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Long wait for results in Negros

WORKHORSE
Should there be a search for horses in the recently concluded elections and the ongoing counting of results, the field should narrow to people like this election personnel in Pagadian City who goes down on her knees to perform her election duty.

BACOLOD CITY... Unlike the rest of the towns and cities of the two provinces of Negros Multi, residents of Valladolid town and Silay City on the Occidental side and Talisay on the Oriental side have to wait longer before their winning mayors and other local officials are proclaimed because of the protests filed during the canvass of returns.

A pre-proclamation protest has temporarily stopped the canvassing of votes in Silay City. The protest, raised by the camp of damaged candidate Mercy Yeno-Gaut Divinagrat, at People's Coalition, claimed there was fraud in the preparation of the election returns in four precincts in barangays Guinhalaran, Caradgas and Lab-ahan.

Gaut was leading in the contestation in Election canvass by 80 votes while contestation in Mayor Hector "Tata" Villanueva had a lead of 7% votes, save Gaut in the rally of the National Unionist Movement for Peace Elections (Sanfred).

The Sanfred court annulled Villanueva getting 10,000 votes over Sanfred's 10,758 votes.

A lawyer from Gaut's camp, who asked not to be identified, said that if the city board of canvassers would dismiss their protest, they will file an appeal with the Commission on Elections in Manila which would further delay the proceedings.

Of all the towns and cities in Negros Occidental, only the winning councilors were proclaimed, while in Silay City some of the winners have been proclaimed.

Election provincial supervisor Marolee Cenilero said that if the protests of opposing camps in Valladolid were not resolved soon, the numbers one councilor would act as mayor and the number two councilor as vice mayor.

The camp of mayoral candidate Bettered Yagato claimed that returns for numerous precincts have been tampered with and falsified, stopping the proclamation of Rosario Pendatun, who said that the official count showed he won by 1,800 votes.

In Silay City, no proclamation has been made for all local positions because of protests. Carlo D' Gimon and Abet Ong, DH Flaga thrown around, with seven of their candidates in the winning 10 councilors.

In Valladolid town in Negros Occidental, only the winning councilors were proclaimed, while in Silay City some of the winners have been proclaimed.

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In Silay City, no proclamation has been made for all local positions because of protests. Carlo D' Gimon and Abet Ong, DH Flaga thrown

Priest, poll workers . . .

Tuesday, May 11, 2004

tour of Dumaliln

Only 21 circular returns were canvassed on Tuesday morning.

Both camps of mayoral rivals incumbent Mayor Nestor Perez and incumbent Vice Mayor Rebee "Cookie" Yaco alleged of possible fraud and irregularities in this election.

Irregularities

Speaking on behalf of Perez, municipal administrator Aquilino A. Garcia III said Perez's camp has noted several irregularities, including that in the 2nd 3rd Wave of the canvass law of Camelito Claro Benjamin Abaloz, Yaco's wife being Mudar' daughter, Joy Mudar.

But Yaco said this issue was only being used against him.

Garcia added that an election day around 1:0 of Perez' men were arrested by men shield an defenestrate reliable with a "flash force Comelec" sign and were brought to the police. They were only released after three hours.

Yaco said "the truth and bottomline" is the disenfranchisement of voters allegedly done by the district supervisor who "conspired with the teachers in not having our voters."

Lawyer Ariel Rubio, one of the co's lawyers, said they had noted "election returns that had been tampered, fraudulent or falsified, or incomplete" such as "several number of votes."

Rubio noted that of Yaco's supporters were not allowed to vote. He said they also noted that some ballot boxes did not have padlocks. He said they also have a video footage showing some individuals taking something, allegedly election returns, from ballot boxes and replacing them.

Yaco's camp held a rally yesterday protesting the alleged fraud.

The fourth 2004 Barangay count, which was finished on Thursday, showed Perez leading by more than 1,000 votes, Mayor said.

Aquino said they were not experiencing problems in canvassing except for the objections of the 3rd to canvass that there was an illegal composition of the board of canvassers and illegal proclamation.

"The canvassing will continue. We will do it as fast as we can. At the rate of the canvassing we will probably finish tomorrow," Aquino said.

Canadiansers

In Canadiansers, gubernatorial candidate Joseph Uni Fiel a protest with the Comelec provincial office Friday night due to alleged discrepancies in the canvassing.

Comelec provincial officer Said Ali Magundaba suspended the canvassing until Wednesday.

Lawyer Jake Sarbida, Cano legal counsel, contested the results in Canadiansers, Pigu and Pandan towns, where they were the lack of documents in some returns, no signature by the election inspectors, and other technical errors.

Before the canvassing was suspended, reduction of Joy Lontoc's (for Governor Jr. was leading by 2,350 votes against Gov. Reporter Jesus Clarito Gorting and Governor Lovgio, PhilStarNews Lucon Bureau

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Isabela under Comelec control

ILAGAN, Isabela—The Commission on Elections on Friday placed Isabela under its control following the protest lodged by supporters of re-electionist Gov. Faustino Dy Jr. and leading gubernatorial candidate Ms. Grace Cirib-Padaca.

Comelec Commissioner Mehol Sadain, in charge for Cagayan Valley, said the decision to place the province under its control was reached during the commission's en banc session on Friday.

Official Comelec results in 27 towns and a city of Isabela on Saturday morning showed Dy (with 1,25,712 votes) trailing Padaca (with 1,40,394 votes).

Lawyer Gru Antonio Oberio Abugado, counsel of Dy's party, the Nacionalist People's Coalition, earlier asked the provincial board of canvassers to declare a failure of elections in the towns of San Mariano, Jones and Santo Tomas.

Abugado cited the May 11 results in the town halls of San Mariano and Jones on May 12, where election returns were lost.

Lawyer Boy Dimla, acting Isabela election supervisor, said he lodged the appeal to Sadain. Dimla earlier delivered the canvassing of votes for local positions in San Mariano and Jones due to the attacks.

He ordered were the canvassing of votes for governor and vice governor in Ilagan until the protests that some village officials were coerced by supported New People's Army rebels to campaign and vote for their candidates. The canvassing in Cauayan town was also suspended after Dy's votes plummeted from more than a 15,000-vote margin in the provincial canvassing while the audit copy of the election returns showed Padaca would be ahead 3,000 votes in the town.

Fr. Antonio Ancheta, a volunteer of the National Citizens' Movement for Free Elections-Parish Pastoral Council for Responsible Voting, challenged the authenticity of the election returns.

Padaca, who lost to Dy in the 2001 elections, accused Dy's group of rigging the results in Cauayan town.

"That's exactly what they did to me in the previous [elections]. This time, they are necessarily exposed because we have our back up copies from the party and the PPCRV," she said.

The Dys, however, denied that they were rigging election returns in the province.

In Barangay, state supporters of mayoral bets in Ayaya town filed a brief hearings the municipal election offices for nine hours on Friday over alleged irregularities in the conduct of the canvassing of votes.

Ayaya election officer Eli Mangual was seen entering in a kiosk near the town hall by 10 men belonging to the camps of six mayoral candidates from noon to 9 p.m.

One of the aspirants, Norberto Lambang, confirmed they nominated Mangual from joining the canvassing.

Nick Sunio, who is seeking a second seat, said he saw Mangual bringing two ballot boxes inside the office of assistant Mayor Benigno Ignino, the circle of leading municipal candidate Luis Ignino. Mangual denied doing this.

Despite this, the canvassing proceeded. The vice chair of the municipal canvassers issued and the poll watchers unanimously agreed to continue.

But Mangual denied being held hostage. He said he "defected" himself from the canvassing to "help ease the tension."

The local police and the provincial Comelec said Mangual agreed to "stay away from the canvassing place and stay at the kiosk to pacify the angry crowd."

In Bulacan, three officials of the Bagong Alyansang Makabayan were hurt after police dispersed a picket staged by their group on Friday night.

In Santa Maria, Abraham Asuncion, provincial Comelec officer said the Comelec en banc declared failure of elections in Barangay Ura del Norte following the shooting of at least three ballot boxes there. Reports from Villamor Flaya Jr., Mabel Saucon and Ben Abaz Jhon, PhilStarNews Lucon Bureau, and Reuters Oreja, Gerardo Reyes, Jun Mollo and Allan Macatuno, PDI Central Luzon Desk

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Editor Jun Bandigued
Assoc. Ed./Nico A. Alconaba

YOLUNTEERS at work inside the Mindanao Civic Center in Tboli, Lanao del Norte.

The silent heroes of the elections

By Jeffrey P. Manlogo
Tboli, Lanao del Norte

THEY folded the election returns, probably to ease congestion. Some unwittingly crumpled the election paraphernalia while still others sat upon them.

With hundreds of people buzzing with names of politicians, the counting of votes at the packed venue of the Mindanao Civic Center (MCC) in Tboli, Lanao del Norte, is a grim picture of hostility.

Election inspectors and officials, poll watchers, teachers, canvassers and volunteers... they are the frontliners in every election and the human factor behind the ongoing nationwide hymn. But most often than not, these men and women who guard the ballot boxes and risk their lives receive only meek consideration from the entire electoral set-up of the country.

On Monday, when the first tallies of election result and anxiety unfurrowed in precincts nationwide, over 6,000 people came to Mindanao's premier sports complex to wait the counting of votes. They are composed of members of the board of election inspectors, and poll watchers and volunteers from the 13 municipalities in Lanao del Norte where election-related violence has threatened the polling.

The Commission on Elections provincial office also decided to move the counting of votes to the MCC because other municipalities lacked enough space for the votes to be properly accounted for.

But conditions at the sports complex proved to be only slightly comforting as each precinct virtually has benches, with election paraphernalia sprawled all over the benches. Some of the election returns were on top of one another, others hung on the rails of the facility overlooking an empty race track oval.

The BEI members had to go up and down the bleachers to tally the votes and search over a hundred names of candidates.

For three straight days and counting, these unsung heroes of Philippine modern-day election process watch their tension, patience and will amid the hustle and bustle of a still primitive setup.

First time

"This is my first time to be a poll watcher and the experience is really exhausting," Abdul Jabbar, 34, said.

Jabbar, who works for a mayoral candidate in Marogong municipality, noted that they had been working overtime to count 53 more precincts.

"Back here, we don't have brownouts, but the physical strain, hunger and eye exposure to the cold and the rain is something you can not disregard," he added.

At night, he said, the counting continued, although most of them slept to make the most of the hour-long recess. "The women remain on the bleachers, while the men go outside to find their places. It is our custom that an unmarried man and woman should not sleep together in the same place," Jabbar said.

Also from election coordinator, had only this to ask from the Comelec: "Make it better next time."

"Election officers rest for only 6-8 hours a day here. But that is not enough, uninterrupted sleep. You can see from their very faces that they are very tired already," he said, pointing at the women who brought their children with them.

Amer said that when the Supreme Court scrapped the proposed computerization of counting, it was only the legal aspect of the issue and overlooked its practicability. "The current election is the most disorderly, disorganized and very, very excruciating of all," he said.

But for Amer, his people have decided to accept what is given to them. "The law may be harsh, but that is the law."

Asked whether he agrees that the set-up in the counting of votes at the grandstand is downright abhorrent, Amer said: "We are pretty aware that it is inhuman. But the votes I am sure you have been honestly counted."

Story of courage

At the Provincial Training Center (PTC), which is not so far from the southern city municipal canvassing has just been finished for eight of the province's 20 municipalities.

Jasmian Sanayon, a poll watcher from Nunungan town, where the provincial Comelec declared failure of elections in four barangays, tells of another story of courage.

"The thunders in the grandstand was very scary. But you cannot say we are home all in the PTC because we are also concerned here," she said.

Sanayon related that she and her family have left their home in the uplands and came all the way down for the elections. They have not returned since, she added.

"At night, we just sleep here," she said, pointing at the four-cornered perimeter in the parking area outside the covered basketball court. She was seeing under cover, along with several women who apparently found temporary freedom.

But when asked whether she has come to a point of wanting to stop for reasons of danger, Sanayon said: "Of course. But it depends on you. The desire will take over you if you will let it to."

For some reasons, the composite of the ballot posses inner strength that sustain their bodies for hours. And while politicians paid millions for their political advertisements, these random-day heroes mapped to an unremorseful ballot campaign to silence.

Their sunny manifests in the long hours of work, in the makeshift projects, in the inadequate facilities, and in the threats of violence that have already claimed lives. Today, the heroes that elections bring has not changed.

Election commissioner to Pimentel: #%@¿?&!!!

Marvin P Mardi

A PUNDIC Election Commissioner Virgilio Garcillano yesterday lashed at his most detractor, Sen. Aquilino Pimentel and described him as an adult rig paying case of a ... [illegible]

Visibly upset, Garcillano said he might punch as an general for saying that he would not last in his post until June 30 and added that he delays case if he was not confirmed by the Commission on Appointments.

The remarks were made during an ambush interview yesterday at the Philippine International Convention Center where the Commission on Elections was conducting the second canvass for senatorial candidates and party list groups.

The other day, Pimentel had accused Garcillano of meeting with Philippine Gaming Corp. president Ephraim Genuino at the Manila Diamond Hotel on Thursday night just after opposition members accused the election official of "vote-managing" election results in Mindanao.

According to Pimentel, Garcillano allegedly met with Genuino in the Sabungerong Pilipino room of the hotel. Before 9:15 p.m., the election commissioner left the hotel with his aides, one of whom reportedly carried shopping paper bag.

The senator also said the commissioner stayed in room no. 3029 allegedly booked by Sen. Panfilo Lacson.

Yesterday Garcillano denied the accusations saying that he does not even know Genuino and Ang.

"Pakakasuhin ko siya (This is my warning) ... if I am not confirmed as a commissioner, I will not die. ...Ang daya- kaman ng pinapasa niki, nakakapanic na! (This is hard, this is frustrating)," he said, near tears.

"It's very painful. I have been feeling this grief because gusto ang pinagsisi niya sa akin—mali ng parang sa iyon (he has been doing this to me. That one of a ...)," the election official added.

Garcillano said he was indeed at the hotel around that time but "to never had dinner with Genuino. The bag he had with him contained a stuffed toy—a monkey—which was usually given to customers who buy dalandan (orange fruit).

But the election official, there was nothing wrong with his presence at the hotel because he gave them to the fish.

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BOHOL
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PROVINCIAL TABULATIONS

NATIONAL CAPITAL REGION

Quick Count (Partial, Unofficial)

CALOOCAN CITY

Mayor
as of 11:10 p.m. 5/13/04
68% of total precincts

Malapitan, Oscar G.	88,767
Echiverri, Raymundo A.	74,640
Ponciano, Edwina DC.	13,767
Corrales, Sulpicio D.	1,760
Quimbilan, Mauro L. Jr.	774

Congressional (Lone) District

Rodolfo, Luis A.	72,708
Lorenzana, Benedicto Jr.	57,619
Rigos, Florentino J.	10,613

Mayor
As of 85% of precincts accounted

Echiverri, Jose Jr. C.	210,601
Lopez, Leonardo A. Jr. C.	134,658
Lugtu, Sally	1,944
Abad, Rodrigo	1,628
Suarez, Antonio C.	1,362
Fernandez, Edwardo P.	1,259

MANDALUYONG CITY

Canvass, final official results

Congressional

De Guzman, Neil A.	70,789
Cabochan, Rolando DC.	19,827
Mabilog, Gerardo L.	1,373

Mayor

Fernando, Ma. Lourdes	69,603
Nufiada, Jose Ferdinand	37,992
Medina, Benjamin A. Jr.	2,295
Cuna, Gerardo A.	1,746
Magbojos, Esmeralda P.	1,746

PARANAQUE CITY

Abolished, as of 2 DC, 5/13/04

Congressional (District 1)

Cayetano, Alexander J.	54,883
Rumayo, Teresa L. Jr. T.	45,670
Barry, Jaime Jr. J.	8,193
Ilarde, Rodolfo B.	1,295
Sumulong, Jose B.	276
Lucman, Mohamad E.	191
Reyes, Reginaldo J.	117
Portes, Reggie J.	112

Congressional (District 2)

Quiazon, Eduardo	37,256
Marquez, Joan F.	17,629
Edeliza, Manuel A. C.	1,701
Montano, Pedro T.	1,121
Mauricio, Eligenio Jr. M.	1,108
Matti, Jose Louis A. K.	36
Sumulong, Julia B.	7
Marquez, Dominico O.	0

Mayor

Bernabe, Florencio Jr.	47,015
Olivarez, Pablo B.	37,921
Manuel, Donna L.	3,628
De Asis, Bartolomeo B.	473
Valdellon, Reynaldo A.	196
Molino, Ma. Luisa B.	146
Perez, Oscar C.	142
Tony, Jose, Sr. C.	111

PASAY CITY

Canvass, as of 11pm, 5/14/04

Congressional

De Venecia, A.	39,668
Calixto-Rubiano, Ma. E.	39,612
Evangelista, Jaelo D.	313
Comilla, Eduardo C.	193

Mayor

Trillanes, Benjamin D.	39,079
Antonino, Wenceslao T.	38,671
Marcelo, Reynaldo Jr. M.	359
Malaga, Rosauro	213
Peñaflor, Noel Fabroa	97

PASIG CITY

Abolished, as of 11pm, 5/14/04

Congressional

Jaworski, Robert	43,963
Sumulong, Roman T.	43,954
Cortez, Roy M.	4,113
Romero, Lorna S.	3,785
Buencamino, Paulino M.	685
Salcedo, Benito S.	188

Mayor

Eusebio, Vicente P.	47,910
Lacuna, Bobby P.	7,500
Bonavidez, Chonnie D.	5,000
Bueno, Belen S.	3,028
Salcedo, Alexander C.	2,139
Peralta, Victoria I.	1,796
Bongo, Peter Sr.	234

QUEZON CITY

Abolished, as of 12mn, 5/13/04
48.81% of total precincts

Congressional (District 1)

Crisologo, Manuel P.	31,923
Payot, Rufino C.	29,513
Gatmin, Wilma A.	10,026
Sarmiento, Michael J.	1,911
Ramos, Barbara DC.	1,871
Guerrero, Arturo DC. S.	984

Congressional (District 2)

Lagumbay, Mary Ann L.	43,606
Medina, Ismael G. Jr.	41,870
Lobo, Claudio V.	38,618
Agcaoili, Salito, Jr. S.	734
Jimenez, Walter Rufus	476
Serrano, Enrico S.	

Congressional (District 3)

Gutierrez, Ma. Victoria T.	31,284
Perez, Michael T.	24,026
Tapia, Emmanuel S.	949
Cabochan, Anna Liza C.	

Congressional (District 4)

Yusi, Rainelda T.	43,609
Tanday, Jesus C.	29,827
Rita, Manuel C.	2,512
Martin, Jose L.	111

Mayor

Belmonte, Feliciano, Jr.	313,610
Matibag, Michael, Jr. A.	200,612
Co, Andrea S.	1,333
Malinis, Christian V.	

SAN JUAN

Canvass, final official results

Congressional

Lacson, Ronaldo B.	29,712
Acosta-Velez, Vicente M.	29,663
Gonzales, Jose Mari Z.	1,908
Jimenez, Albert, Jr. M.	1,151

Mayor

Lacson, Joseph Victor G.	41,175
Mamaclay, Gilberto C.	8,077
San Juan, Bernardo	1,780

PROVINCIAL TABULATIONS

Canvass, final official results

Congressional

Lacson, Ronaldo B.	29,712
Acosta-Velez, Vicente M.	29,663
Gonzales, Jose Mari Z.	1,908
Jimenez, Albert, Jr. M.	1,151

Mayor

Lacson, Joseph Victor G.	41,175
Mamaclay, Gilberto C.	8,077
San Juan, Bernardo	1,780

PROVINCIAL TABULATIONS

Canvass, final official results

Congressional

Lacson, Ronaldo B.	29,712
Acosta-Velez, Vicente M.	29,663
Gonzales, Jose Mari Z.	1,908
Jimenez, Albert, Jr. M.	1,151

Mayor

Lacson, Joseph Victor G.	41,175
Mamaclay, Gilberto C.	8,077
San Juan, Bernardo	1,780

TAGUIG

Canvass, as of 8am, 5/15/04
100% out of 167 precincts

Congressional

Casanova, Alan Peter S.	69,603
Bunag, Isidro B.	67,738
Romo, Carmelo S.	1,780

Mayor

Casino, Sonny	280
Lukso-Atienza, Ma. Lourdes	69,587
Guillermo, Ferdinand	1,108
Filipo, Sophron	69,458

MUNTINLUPA

Canvass, final official results

Mayor

Fresnedi, Nikki M.	67,122
Biazon, Benjamin M. Jr.	23,960
Marquez, Fredo A.	1,119

Congressional

Delgado, Frederico D.	60,098
Lacson, Danilo L.	29,602
Cinco, Roberto T.	1,134

ANTIPOLO CITY

Canvass, final official results

Congressional (District 1)

Puno, Rosario	48,115
Dalisdisan, Josefina	33,624
Quijano, Ignacio	405
Guevarra, Tantuico Jr.	361
Espano, Maximo E.	338
Lallana, Ariel Agabao	67

Congressional (District 2)

Sumulong, Victor O.	40,051
Martinez, Felix	29,614
Garcia, Rodrigo	6888

Mayor

Dalisdisan, Angelito	50,233
Dy, Romeo	17,511
Robleto, Silverio S.	193

Opportunity knocks but once.

JOB

METRO
Editor Abelardo S. Manalay

Poll body clerk tagged in 'dagdag-bawas' try

By Luige del Puerto

THE WOMAN apprehended for an alleged attempt to include questionable election returns in the counting in Cainta, Rizal, has been identified as an employee of the local Commission on Elections.

A Comelec staff member in Cainta said that Cynthia "Sheneng" Linares, who has been identified as the woman who allegedly tried to insert 118 questionable returns in the pile of legitimate election documents, was an employee of the poll body.

Claro Upay, a former Sangguniang Bayan secretary, confirmed that Linares was the woman who brought in the contested returns Thursday.

Upay is running for councilor under mayoral candidate Meo Bagtas.

Linares was apprehended with a certain Jonathan Victor Tolentino.

Lawyer Sibaraki Bilan, a member of the Board of Canvassers, said the Board was not expecting election returns at the time Linares was apprehended.

Meanwhile, canvassing was delayed yesterday in Cainta after Chairman Sarmiento, counsel of Mayor Nicanor Pelin, wanted the Board of Canvassers to include the questionable election returns in the tabulation.

Canvassing was only continued at 4:30 p.m. after Upay's lawyer, Rafael de Vera, had successfully blocked the inclusion of the controversial returns.

On Friday night, a bullet lived in the canvassing area on the third floor of the municipal hall forced the stopping of the canvassing.

Bagtas said the shooting appeared to be a last-ditch effort to stop the canvassing.

Bagtas is reportedly running in all mayoral contests for the mayoral position in Cainta.

Decision on new Pasig mayor rests on Comelec

RESPITE
Escaping from the noise generated by the recent elections, a father and his son spend a quiet afternoon at the UP lagoon in Diliman, Quezon City.

By Luige del Puerto

THE COMELEC en banc will decide on the fate of Pasig City Mayor-elect Vicente "Vico" Sotto III, who was proclaimed by the Pasig City Board of Canvassers (BOC) on Friday night.

Sotto, 23, a newcomer in politics, was proclaimed mayor after the BOC dismissed the petition for disqualification filed by Comelec Commissioner Resurreccion Borra.

Borra had ordered the BOC not to proclaim Sotto, saying the latter misrepresented himself as a resident of Pasig City when he ran for mayor.

Sotto's camp said Borra's order was issued without jurisdiction.

Sotto's lawyer, Romulo Macalintal, said the Comelec en banc would decide on the petition for disqualification filed by Atty. Evelio Leviste, Sotto's opponent in the May 10 elections.

Macalintal

Sunday SPORTS

Collegiate teams win

By Tricia Duarte

COLLEGIATE teams Ice Pipers-Arenas and Toyota-Lorenzo smeared seasoned foes yesterday, giving Hapee a free ride to the quarterfinals while muddling up the PBL Unity Cup standings after the penultimate eliminations round playdates at the Lorenzo gym.

The Eagles subjugated Montalla, 91-69, while the Knights rallied for a 69-68 win, over Hot Star as both stayed alive after closing out with 4-5 tallies like their victims and the idle Tenth Sparklers and Sentosa-STE.

The final elims playdate is scheduled Tuesday and Hapee can afford to lose against the Tigers and still gain a bona-vi-bona advantage in the quarterfinals because of its superior quotient.

Banked qualifiers as the 3 with a win and, like defending champion Hapee, will need to win just once via advance, bearing the preposition in yesterday's games to a pair of P20 notches for the bonus two slots.

Montalla

Ice Pipers-Arenas 91...

Hot Star 68...

Toyota-Lorenzo 69...

Sentosa-STE 68...

LEE-PIPES Arenas's J.E. Tenorio dribbles around a defender

Tierro eyes high ranking in Open

By Dennis U. Rosa

SUBIC BAY FREEPORT ZONE—Young Davis Cup student Patrick John Tierro will try to rock the national rankings as he competes in the much-awaited National Tennis Open Championships slated May 19-23 at the Subic Bay International Drama Center here.

Described by former Wimbledon champion Mr Cash as "world caliber" the 18-year-old Team-and-School bets a tough men's field led by he-moralled and Philippines' number one Johnny Arcilla.

Tierro, 6-foot-1, however, will play in front of his hometown fans. Tierro's initially tied to Arcilla last year in the finals of the 2nd Ivy Cebuana Lhuillier tennis event. He shocked several seed Joseph Vincent in the semis.

Supported by Rizza Bank of the Philippines, Adidas Philippines, Cebuana Lhuillier, Dunlop-Slazenger, HBC, Viva Mineral Water, The Philippine Star, San Miguel Corporation, Chris Sports, Senayt Construction and Days Inn Suites, the tournament also features the Dayrite Cup, in honor of MBMA chair Tony Pujanes.

The country's top clubs are competing in the Dayrite Cup. Aside from the men's open, the ladies open will also be held.

"I'll try my best. It's a challenge when you go up against the top guns of Philippine tennis, but I'm going for it," said Tierro, who also won a $10,000 Challenger's Tournament in the US last year.

Accused Boomie with his youthful traits, Tierro has all the makings of the new tennis hero.

"He has a big serve and is big boned. It's one he as outstanding to his opponent that once he gets at the net, it will be difficult to pass him and win the point," noted Cash.

Cash actually worked on Tierro's game for eight weeks at the Cash Flapper Tennis Academy in Gold Coast through the backing of SBFZ chief Feorpang Simon and sportsman Boomerangers Jose Vicente Lhuillier, an avid tennis player.

Lhuillier, also known as the manager of the national men's basketball team, has pledged to send the young netter to Europe for further training.

Tierro said he expects the whole of Subic Bay to cheer for his favorite sportsman.

"I believe that Tierro will be the next big thing in tennis. Tierro's not like Boom Jeffrie Wee (Mercurio's senior), and the Amparo Dayrite tandem (who 50s and 50s all room).

Tierro himself put the country in the international tennis sporting arena in the 90s when he won action in the French, US, Wimbledon and Australian Open, an achievement still unrivaled today.

Estimo set to file ₱30M libel suit

ESTIMO

NATIONAL... Elena Robredo of the Philippine [illegible] secretary general Secretary Tierro a posted in file a P30-million damage suit against former Vice President Pharmacia Corporation and three others for a series of articles accusing him of alleged falsification of public documents.

Seeking the articles maligned his person and destroyed his reputation, Estimo announced he was also suing Mr/Sr executive director Carlo Blando, Bobby Bautista and Grandmaster Jerry Rincon, Campomanes, Abenda and Antonio 'would' be criminally charged with 25 counts and Bautista five counts of libel, he added.

In his complaint-affidavit, Estimo accused the respondents of "conspiring to willfully, unlawfully and feloniously circulate, distribute and disseminate and/or cause the publication of a series of articles, which are highly defamatory malicious and libelous by imputing the commission of a crime or an act which caused dishonor, discredit or contempt on my person."

Estimo said the series of articles, the latest of which came out in the country's major newspapers last Friday, also damaged his reputation and integrity as an individual and subjected him to trial by publicity. "thereby causing me and my family pain, embarrassment and extreme humiliation."

The criminal complaint will be filed [illegible] next week with the Quezon City Prosecutor's Office.

Estimo said the issues raised by respondents are old, recycled and which have been explained in a position paper he submitted to the SCFP board of directors.

"The [illegible] has been in that the funding the SCFP received from the Philippine Sports Commission (PSC) did not end in anyone's pocket," he said.

Estimo explained that the P1.128 million assistance requested by SCFP President Mel Defensor from the PSC two years ago were into the prize fund accompanying the national chess championship.

"All of them were amounts of, supposedly Mr. Campomanes who himself disbursed 1900,000 for distribution of prizes. Mr Campomanes was later refunded P1 million, including interest," Estimo told.

Estimo had claimed that the SCFP owed him P90,000 as allowances for the Chess Olympiad held last year in Bled, Slovenia.

SUNDAY, MAY 16, 2004

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

Sunday SPORTS

Tigers nip Express, keep No. 2 spot

CEGA-CEGAYA Los Angeles (left) receives a basketball off a Toyota defender in the PBA last night.

By Jane Plenares

MARK Sanford ignored his ailing knees to power Coca-Cola to a thrilling 102-100 victory over Federal Express last night in the Gene Matador PBA Fiesta Conference at the Philsports Arena.

Sanford nailed a long jumper over the outstretched arms of Mike Maldonado 10 seconds left to cap a game-long scintillating stand by the Tigers, who registered their 10th victory in 15 games.

At odds of his possible departure overhead, Sanford still pumped in 30 points mostly through jumpers and floaters on top of 17 rebounds and six assists.

Sanford is playing in pain with his right knee still to recover from a confusion and his other knee reinvented due to the nerve and tear resulting from the Tigers' run and gun play.

"I'm sure I take it seriously as we're thinking long and hard on putting him in the injury list. The doctors said that's worse or four more weeks of complete rest," said Coca-Cola coach Chot Reyes.

If Sanford is placed in and, by Reyes said the Tigers would pick another from Hale or Tim McCarty who are former Coca-Cola imports.

COCA-COLA (102)—Sanford 30, Cansino 14, Abarrientos 10, Andrada 10, Wainwright 8, Magalpok 8, Jones 7, Hernandez 4, Maldonado 2, Castelo, Alvarez 0, Antonio 0.

FEDEX (100)—Maldonado 33, Pilar 15, Arboleda 12, Alvarez 11, Alfonso 10, Johnson 6, Mendoza 5, De Ocampo 4, Bugarin 3, Sandoval, Cruz 0.

Quarters: 20-20, 52-49, 82-78, 102-100.

Hurst grabs lead; Delasin 1 behind

FRANKLIN, Tennessee—Bo Hurst grabbed a share of the Nickelodeon Friday with Mexico's Lorena Ochoa as the two-defend LPGA Franklin Championship, posting a 3-under par 69 at the Vanderbilt Legends Club.

Play was suspended for the day with 26 players still on the course, and the second round will be completed Saturday morning.

Able to overcome the wind and avoid the rain at the Legends Course, Hurst matched Ochoa's 36-hole total of 7-under 137, a stroke better than Wendy Ward, Nancy Scranton and Pil-Hwan Kim/Sunday Delasin.

Ochoa shot a 67 which Delasin matched after opening with a 71. Ward had a 70 and Scranton, the first-round leader, had 72.

The LPGA Tour is back in Tennessee after a one-year hiatus, one that wasn't thought of locally by Hurst. While she is a native of California and lives in Arizona, Hurst loves Tennessee.

Ochoa played that way Friday, firing a 7-par on route to a 67. She has a pair of top-10 ports and two others from 15 but opening her campaign.

AFP

Preakness kicks off

SMARTY Jones, trained by Sarvis, is washed down after a morning workout. REUTER

BALTIMORE—Smarty Jones' bold jaunt through the stop at the Kentucky Derby won a frolic compared to the challenge he faces as the overwhelming favorite in the Preakness.

The undefeated colt The Gliff's Edge on Pimlico's fifth turn horses to compete on Saturday against Smarty Jones, who will seek to become the first Triple Crown winner since Affirmed in 1978.

Smarty Jones has won all seven of his races, highlighted by a come-from-behind victory at Churchill Downs on May 1. None in his four preliminaries on Kentucky Derby champion, comes by near difficult test.

"I think this is the toughest race he's had," Smarty Jones trainer John Servis said. "To come out of the biggest race of his life and run in just two weeks against the same horses is difficult enough. Then you throw in the mud or fast track horses and kind of put the ball's eye on our back. I think he's going to have to step his game up."

Virtually everything went right for Smarty Jones in Kentucky, including a sturdy rain that made the track a gooey mess.

"But is info anything same from the Derby horses, but we got a sloppy track which, I don't know if it helped, but it certainly didn't hurt us," Servis said.

Smarty Jones probably won't get a similar deluge of rain on Saturday—the weather forecast in Baltimore calls for temperatures in the high 70s with a 40 percent chance of rain in the late afternoon. AP

PSA Cup on today

SEVEN battle-tested horses make up the cast in today's Gold PSA Philippine Sportswriters Association) Cup, a one-mile event featuring a true known for his deep passion for horse racing.

At around 5 this afternoon, Four Wind, Master Maker, Barona Story, San Diego Boss, Speed Madness, Miss's Magic and imported horse Sure Lizard will dispute prizes totaling P500,000 in the 1,600-meter event hosted by the Philippine Racing Club Inc. (PRC), sponsored by the Philippine Racing Commission headed by Jimmy C. Uling and organized by the PSA.

The honoree is the late Guido "Boy" Mendoza Jr., who died of a heart attack two weeks ago, after spending almost a lifetime working as a jockey, horse-racing columnist and racing steward.

PSA president Jimmy Cantos of Malaya thanked the Philkoreans for sponsoring the event and the PRCI for hosting it, adding it's just appropriate to hold the PSA event in honor of somebody who loved horse racing so much.

The other big event this afternoon is the 1,000-m William Inglis & Son Australia Cup, featuring seven imported horses from Down Under and offering a paycheck of P200,000 to the winner.

RACING TIPS

AT SANTA ANA
1st MC - 500

Race 1—1. Light My Fire 2. Jonny's Choice 3. G Square 4. Power and Right

Race 2—1. Manny Order 2. Simply Credited 3. Battle Lady 4. Spinning Thunder 5. Tony's Bond

Race 3—1. Diamond 2. Jolene's Hittin Story

Race 4—1. Wish Is Mine 2. Yakusha 3. Silver Time Lady 4. Ground Take 5. It Annoys

Race 5—1. Mission Rose 2. Best Lassie 3. Sac Miss Terry 4. San Diego Bossy

Race 6—1. Introduce 2. Rosebud 3. Wish Maker 4. Apple Splash

Race 7—1. Child Star Mar 2. Throttle 3. Cryptonite 4. Some Splendour

Race 8—1. Morning Glory 2. Front Page 3. Silver Jenny's Win 4. Dream Romance

Race 9—1. Angel Lyser Night Gold 2. Mars Fi 3. Midnight 4. Shakhanee 5. Flash Kitty

Race 10—1. Precious Moment 2. Applejacks 3. Jennifer 4. Sidekick From Sin Street

Race 11—1. Dream Romance 2. Miami Sally 3. Jackpoor

Race 12—1. Allgood's Pet 2. Super Magic 3. Bold Lucky 4. Princess Ann

Race 13—1. Difficult Bird 2. Hurry Prince 3. Action 4. Naughty 5. Lunar Caress 6. Should Rain

Triple Crown opener May 23

IF WISE could go down as one of the most exciting Triple Crown series ever, 11 of the country's finest 3-year-olds will parade in the most sure Sunday May 23 to compete in the fourth-weekend running of the Schaefer SR. Corpuzgate Jr. Cup, opening leg of the 2004 Triple Crown series at the San Lazaro Leisure Park in Carmona, Cavite.

Considered as the breeding ground of champions, the showdown of future track stars up-

Sportswatch

Navy, PAF teasers shine in Baguio

BAGUIO CITY—Veteran teams from the Philippine Navy and the Philippine Air Force topped the elimination rounds of the First Baguio Beach Volleyball Tournament Saturday. Pedro Dimalanta, vice-president of the Philippine Amateur Volleyball Association (Pava), said the three military teams made it to the beach from the Philippine volleyball team. Fifteen teams represented the Baguio base University, University of the Philippines, Ateneo, Letran, Diliman, and the University of Asia and the Pacific competed with University of Baguio, University of the Cordilleras and Saint Louis University in the first ever beach volleyball tourney in the country's summer capital.

Vincent Cabrera, PSN Northern Luzon Bureau

Karate kids rule National Open

THE SIXTH Karate Kids of the Association for the Advancement of Karate dominated the recently concluded 11th PKF National Open Karatedo Tournament, winning seven golds, 13 silvers and 16 bronzes, at the Araneta Sports Complex, Cagayan de Oro City. Bearing first-place finishes in their respective divisions are Jeremiah Tan (8-9 years old Boys Kumite), Alyssa Balbon, (8-9 years old Girls Kumite), Paloma Mikaela Enriquez (10-11 years old Girls Kumite), Norman Mendoza (10-11 years old Boys Kumite), Jeanette Gutierrez (8-9 years old Girls Kata), Patrizcia Lyn Tuman (10-11 years old Girls Kata) and the Women's Kata team composed of Stephanie Lynn Lim, Muriel Santillan, Jeanette Gutierrez, Cecilia Jo Cruz and Patrizcia Lyn Tuman. The meet was organized by the Philippine Karatedo Federation.

PFF preps bails Metro League

ZURICH? Nevertheless, Philippine Football Federation (PFF) president said yesterday that the Metropolitan Football League (MFL) will assure that football is played all year round. The MFL's initial project is the ongoing "1st Metropolitan Summer Football League," from May 4-23 at the Marikina Sports Park in Barangay Sta Elena, Marikina City. The MFL is an organization composed of 10 clubs—Bacoor, Caloocan, Cainta, Las Pinas, Makati, Marikina and clubs like Cine Fe-nandez, Sugar Dalereio, Johanna Jalen, Marie Gaman, Linda Schaefer, Edward Magallona, Rudy Weber and Bob Salvacion.

Alcantara clinches 2 age-group titles

ATHENS—Casey Alcantara captured two titles while Bambi Cueto won her third straight title yesterday in the Phillip Hatton 3 Age Group Championships at the Ynares Memorial Tennis Courts. The fifth-ranked Alcantara of Malta Indian Academy overwhelmed her fellow 14-under seven-year-old rated Patrick Arevalo, 6-1, 6-1, and conquered the 12-under Bacolod City top seed Mikael Sy, 6-4, 2-1 (ret.). The Cainta City lassie, seeded No. 1 in the girls' 10-under division, defeated unranked Cheryl Galura, 6-1, 6-0. Cueto, other title-contender was the Phillip Hatton 12 and 14-titlist. Second-seed Jessie Sequerra took the boys' 13-under title over Ishmael Ivan and Ralph Kenneth Bartolo, 8-0, 4-0, 8-1 and 1, advanced Bacolod Batchmate banged the 12-under title over Miguel Gabriel Pantua, 8-4, 8-0, and top seed Sally Mae Sison rolled past second seed Jessie Lagman, 6-3 (8), 7-6, 6-1, for the girls' 14-under title.

Matua ousts Abadia, gains semis

SUBIC—Top seed Dennis Matua ousted third seed Alexis Abadia, 6-4, 6-0 yesterday to reach the semifinals of the P100,000 Rizal Advertising Tennis Club (RATC) Open at the RATC courts. Matua overwhelmed Abadia but need Johnny Arafiles, who scored a 6-3, 6-1 victory over fifth rated Alexander Lazaro. Second seed Leopoldo Lucero emerged unscathed after Wilson, 6-2 (6-4), and fourth-seed Rolando Pascual outlasted pour sixth rated Ebert Bonaire, 6-4, 5-7, 7-6 (5) to reach the semifinal showdown in the weeklong event sponsored by the Senior Resident Bahamonde hogged the 18-under title over Miguel Gabriel Pantua, 8-4, 8-0, and top seed Sally Mae Sison rolled past second seed Jessie Lagman, 6-3 (8), 7-6, 6-1, for the girls' 14-under title.

RONALD ON THE TEE: Ronald McDonald, the Chief Happiness Officer of McDonald's Philippines, performs the ceremonial tee-off for the 6th Charity Golf Tournament of the Ronald McDonald House of Charities at the Sta. Elena Golf Club in Laguna. The event raised funds for the construction of new Bahay Bubble Daycare Center in the country.

Cebu joins NBC

THE SOUTHERN competition of the National Basketball Conference will see Cebu City bestowed by Toshiba Rights Holder, formally joining three other teams —two-time MBC regional titlist Oriental City, the Iloilo Province and the Laguna de Bay-boys.

Cebu Basketball Federation president Mayor Tomas Osmeña and vice-president Cecilia "Lee" Dillanan Jr. recently signed a memorandum of agreement with NBC officials soon. Herself and Tito Palma, heading the Cebuano participation in the regional tourney.

The Cebuanos will be bolstered by PBA veterans Alfie Cajudo, Chito Loyola, Junel Baguhang, Joe Lacson, Dennis Cortes and the core of the University of the Pacific Green Lancers led by Ronald Quinahon and Ronald Bocao. Rep Allen Lozada is the team manager.

The NBC southern all-stylish on June 4 in Cagayan de Oro City with NBC president Robert Uyi Wanner holding Andy Collegio's Stats.

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER
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today
Sunday BIZ
E-mail at: business@inquirer.com.ph
Business Features Editor Margie Quiroz-Espiritu

'If you have more than you need, share and give dignity to the poor'

By Tina Arceo-Dumlao

DOÑA Consuelo Alejandro "Chito" Madrigal-Collantes was quietly sitting on one of the front pews of the Santuario de San Antonio church at Forbes Park during a mass in September 2002 when the visiting priest singled her out in his homily as he talked about charity beginning at home.

"I felt like a sore thumb sticking out so I approached him after mass and I asked him why did that. He said that he was a visiting priest from the Feeding Services Foundation in Aragon and that he had been looking for me for some time. He said he could use my help for his projects," Madrigal tells the business.

Struck by the priest's fervor and enthusiasm toward helping the community in Aragon, Madrigal found herself forking over P1 million. For many months, she did not hear a thing from Fr. Gerald Brosas and feared he ran away with the money.

Eight months later, Fr. Brosas came back to see her and showed her where her money went. A pavement was built and funds were provided for livelihood projects such as raising pigs and chickens.

"I felt so good when I saw how the community changed. So when he asked me for more money to pursue other projects, I gave it to him," Madrigal says.

That project in Aragon became one of the first major projects of the P200 million Consuelo Madrigal Foundation (CCMF), which she set up in 2005.

At first, the foundation had a haphazard approach to helping others. It merely gave out money to whoever came knocking on its doors—such as students seeking scholarships or employees seeking assistance.

But with the success of the Aragon pro-

At two and a half years old in a nursery costume

(TOP) ON board US Steamer, one of the first Madrigals to be permanently stationed in the country (clockwise): Father Oliver's, living, Madrigal, Pinang and Mama

ject, the foundation's work started to have some focus.

"We decided to professionalize the work and maximize the returns of the benefits of every peso that we are going to put into the foundation. I wanted to make sure that the money we provide is spent well and that the projects have an impact on the community. I don't want any dole outs," Madrigal says.

From that desire came the "Ahon Ilaw Bulang" (shining of blessings) project of the CCMF in partnership with the Catholic Church and various nongovernment organizations, which was launched this month.

The project will be funded by an initial P203.90-million grant from the CCMF, the bulk of which will be used to launch 6 affordable housing, P3.4 million for education, P4 million for capacity-building initiatives and P3 million for microfinance and livelihood projects.

The housing component will be implemented by the Bicol Habitat for Humanity, the local affiliate of Habitat for Humanity Philippines. The group will put up 200 low-cost houses for poverty-stricken families in the region, considered the second poorest in the country.

Helping Bicol is of particular interest to Madrigal as it was in Legazpi City, Albay, where her father, the late Don Vicente

THE EMERGING natural health product: Virgin coconut oil is your non-dairy creamer for cooking or salad dressing, for topical application as moisturizer, antimicrobial on fungus to oil or burns there or as immune system booster to capsules.

Group works to sell virgin coconut oil as health stuff

DR. CONRADO Dayrit's (left) pioneering work on the use of virgin coconut oil in the treatment of AIDS and SARS is cited by VCNO Philippines led by association president Paulo Pharmacist Jr. (right).

Of 37 task forcemen American scientists, senior citizen biochemist Mary Enig, and lipid researcher Joe Kabara—in the Philippines to unpause industry fallacy that coconut oil is bad for health, it takes a fellow Filipino—pharmacologist Dr. Conrado Dayrit—to awaken a dormant Philippine coconut industry with his ground breaking research on the healing properties of virgin coconut oil on HIV-infected and SARS patients.

The recent SARS scare made Filipinos living in a veritable coconut paradise become aware of the health-saving potential of virgin coconut oil—raw, organic, natural, unprocessed. When virgin coconut oil hosts the healthy fatty/triglyceride diet, tropical virgin coconut oil offers more as a healing food, both for the health of a nation and an ailing industry.

With the growing prominence of Filipino scientists and health industry players in organized themselves into a Virgin Coconut Oil Producers and Traders Association of the Philippines to enable them to satisfactorily meet the science-based standards and the market demand for the 21st century medicinal and health wonder oil that they can produce recognition to Dr. Conrado Dayrit for his pioneering efforts in the country.

Known as VCNO Philippines, the group is in the process of adopting the Philippine National Standards for VCNO, which the association found to need clarification, refinement and amendment to conform to the very latest scientific, technological or commercial cooking oils do.

To stress this important fact, VCNO Philippines with the cooperation of Cirtek has received Dr. Bruce Fife, who has written extensively on Amazing Coconut and The Coconut Miracles of Coconut Oil," to conduct a lecture symposium during the May 20-30 International Food Exhibition at the World Trade Center Manila in the 10 lectures given on Dr. Coconut, Dr. Fife will expound on the health benefits of coconut oil, recent local experiences, health and oil and book signing sessions.

The recent induction of association officers last April 16 formalized government support through the Department of Trade and Industry and the Philippine Coconut Authority.

CDO Assistant Secretary Felomina Sporcilla-Bernes, representing Secretary Cesar Purisima gave due recognition to the association for "unselfishly persevering in their efforts to bring together the various coconut farmers, VCNO producers and entrepreneurs of the country." She challenged the group to set a 2004 target output of 100 metric tons of quality virgin coconut oil that is organic compliant and cold-pressed.

In inducting the 29 association officers and members, Philippine Coconut Authority administrator Danilo Concepcion represented Agriculture Secretary Luis Lorenzo declared virgin coconut oil as "the emerging export champion in the coconut industry."

Leading those inducted were: Paulo Monsanto Jr. as president, Teresa Santos vice president, Cesar Villalba Jr. secretary, Dominico Cosse Jr., treasurer, with board members Edelmann Sallada, Jr. and Carlos Tena.

United Coconut Association of the Philippines president Henry Lao, and United Coconut Planters Bank CEO Antonio Cuñas also attended support and acknowledged that a collective effort from all sectors augurs well for the renaissance of the "tree of life."

For inquiries, call 727-3704 or 727-3940.

Adjusting to the line between personal and professional

By Abe Florendo
Contributor

HAPPY

TURNS more to stay. It thus meets the eye. She comes through the door looking fashion-magazine stylish even in her simple blouse and jeans and then mingles with the factory hands in her furniture export complex in Cagdo-Iligan City in Cebu.

She may prefer you like a party girl, which she is not, and a tech cookie, which she is, although she would flinch at the description, but she's also a hairbrushing girl. In fact, after a hard day's work overseeing marketing and product development and chiming her nose on her computer, communicating with her suppliers, buyers and inquirers from all over the world, she throws on a Chloe dress, straps her camera (the latest digital no less) onto her bag (she loves Eye Witness of Chronicles Fu) and goes off on photograph and chronicle the getting big social events of Cebu's 2nd for the city's glossy Eye magazine.

But the glam and glitz she does not seek as much as the confirmed orders from her buyers. And the approval of her dad, the being the only child, in the morning of Empress, of which she is managing director.

Empress Classic is an Indian settlement in North Carolina, and to be the furniture capital of the United States may also be taken to mean the "curse of it," she says proudly and this she pursues with a world-class product line ranging from dining room and living room and bedroom sets to chairs and furniture accessories, using traditional materials such as rattan and molasses and wood and the new materials—resin and fiberglass and polyurethane.

Empress is going to just one of over a hundred big players in Cebu's furniture industry, and like everyone else is feeling the heat of the competition coming from China, Indonesia, Thailand, and more recently Pakistan.

"But Cebu is known the world over for its design and craftsmanship," says Kay Tu. "We are not really nationalized, so we don't do mass production. The income is what's affected but continue to be design-driven will determine our continuing expansion and level of sales in the world market."

She also admits that China, especially, has been invading the Cebu market. "They have the raw or base low, they can get ahead and worse materials from Indonesia," she says.

"But we can also sell to China and compete with them in their own domestic market. China is a huge market with a growing middle class."

Empress has earned one in one niche market—the traditional and cautiously modernizing United States market, which comprises 90 percent of Empress's business mainly through wholesalers.

Kay Tu considers her company "boutique," meaning in Lawrence traditional (the old classic style with corner carvings and so forth) and the contemporary (chairs with mixed media like wrought iron legs, twisted-wood finish and columns, versions of processed natural materials, etc.).

"To be competitive," she says, "we also push native materials (she herself loves and ingenious use of which Cebu is truly famous for). Our product development is based on pushing new materials into traditional uses and using old materials in new ways."

The modestly outdoor herself "very much," Empress has been filling up for years now every weekend by not just accommodating the series of global economic slumps caused by the Gulf War, 9/11 and SARS. Since December of 2002, business in her industry has actually been picking up. "I hope nothing adverse happens once more," she says.

Empress was set up in 1990 at the height of the Asian economic crisis, not a very auspicious time. She had been scuffled to Cebu by her father from North Carolina, where she was studying. Her father feared she might become "too westernized" for her own good. For her he put up Empress, a sister company of the family's sidewall, established in the 70s, it almost the same idea was thinking her business management course.

For May, however, although she might have vague plans about a career—she had even accepted a job during attending an acquaintance's—it wasn't like her father was leaving her home completely, she knew nothing about. The furniture business was not alien to her: "I pretty much grew up with it. In a Chinese family, you talk about business all the time"—during breakfast, at the dinner table, in the living room before bedtime.

Hands-on operation and her own business flair and savvy gave her the confidence and strength to shape Empress according to her vision for it. She thinks her father was right in keeping the business all in the family.

Quoting a Spanish proverb, she says, "The eyes of the owners make the cow grow fat." She also says, "I'm glad I had my dad as my driver here. He had big expectations for me but he did not put on the pressure. It took me some time to adjust to drawing the line between personal and professional, but now we are working well together."

Having driven her more now than to see Empress grow. "It's my dad's legacy. I should be able to do more it's a challenge, something I'd like to do for myself."

She's also doing something for others. She is an active member of the Designers Guild of the Philippines, a professional group affiliated with the Cebu Furniture Industries Association (which she assisted purpose of helping upgrade the skills and artistry of craftsmen in Cebu's furniture industry through workshops, seminars and scholarships. Ironically, none of Cebu's colleges and vocational schools offer formal courses in furniture design or a furniture course.

"FCC" counts some 38 members from Cebu's bigger furniture companies who realize that the future of the industry depends on its high standards of design and craftsmanship and its continuous commitment to technological innovation. Empress is a handful of formally educated designers, who also happens to be owners of their companies, so-called "designers" in most factories are in fact draftsmen.

"There's a world of difference between designer and draftsman," to the mantra of IKEA.

May Tu is inclined to the artistic part of her business. "Part of me," she says, "is still hoping to go more into design. I'm taking a correspondence school in London or Germany. And there's also school in New York and North Carolina."

May Tu, twenty-something, single and more than capable of running Empress she photographs with her digital camera, will not step to get where she wants to be in her business.

'If you have more than you need, share and give dignity to the poor'

From page B1

Madrigal, Jim emerged from very humble beginnings to become the country's richest man at one time with interests in coal, oil, cement, media, shipping and real estate.

Madrigal says she decided to partner with Gabriela for Humanity because she believes in its concept of giving the beneficiaries to work for their homes.

Habitat's mission is also aligned with her principle of not giving things for "free" because she believes, no matter how poor they are, will be able to pay for their own home and put in their "sweat" equity, enabling the group to have funds to help somebody else.

She says she will continue to partner with other organizations to further her interest in helping communities and in the process, create meaningful and positive changes for their families, their communities and the country as a whole.

Among the foundation's projects in the pipeline are construction centers in Tondo, Manila, in partnership with the University of Sto. Tomas and Pasay, Quezon City.

She is happy about being involved in community projects may seem a bit odd for Madrigal, who is the first to admit that for many years of her life, she did not know that poverty even existed.

The fifth of seven children born to Don Montano Madrigal and Susana Paterno, the Forbes lawyer schooled in the United States, grew up in a grand mansion on a two-hectare property along Ortigas Avenue in San Juan. She studied at Assumption Convent and Assumption Convent and Assumption College and

Mrs Lucrecia Kasilag with her daughter Maria Lucrecia

At AGE 14, playing the Lion and Holly Lucy gives us her by her Maria, at the foyer of their home in General Luna

as noted) she was a wonderful world into itself.

There were tennis courts, sprawling gardens, and an army of maids, gardeners, butlers, drivers and presumed worship of Madrigal, who was a senator and a close friend to President Manuel L. Quezon.

It was not until 1945—when she took part in the nonviolent campaign of President Elizabeth Mompaga against Ferdinand Marcos that she went out of her comfort zone and came face to face with the life plaguing Philippine society.

It was a shock, to say the least, for the former high society woman who was considered the paragon of beauty and style and whose face graced the cover of magazines, to realize that the world was not just about pretty clothes, expensive jewelry, fortnightly beauty, a game of tennis and a round of golf in the manicured corners of the Manila Polo club.

She was confronted by people dancing ready with shoelaces and pigs around their necks with chains wrapped to their wrists and also

At AGE 10 in her Arabian ballet costume

Madrigal said.

Madrigal decided to do something about it. As she says, she has more than enough for herself (she has her husband and her nephews and sisters) but there are many others who have nothing to help.

"I want to help where I can and I believe that if you have more than you need, you should share and help raise the dignity of the poor. We who have more than enough should help them work. Later on, you will be surprised at how they respond," Madrigal says.

Working at her foundation, where she put in about P200 million to seed capital, takes up a lot of her time now that she has incurred her responsibilities in the various family companies.

At one time, she was the head of the Madrigal Group of Companies, which includes among its investments the former Bulletin Bank (bought by Metrobank), Concepcion Industrial Corp. (CIC), the Madrigal Business Park in Alabang, the Alabang Town Center, Station Shopping, Rustan's, Sugar, Inc., and Solmac and other. Libraries, Madrigal Condominium and Orchard Poly and Paper. She has left the corporate reins to the next generation of Madrigals. And she couldn't be happier.

"A staff member asked me to help her and I was very hesitant to because I was looking at the pictures of what the private sector doing to their community using the money from the foundation. I was a little hesitant in helping that I was helping," she says.

Brands that Filipinos and Asians love revealed

IF TOE hook with Morehead, 1988 or BPI, print with a 1Bot or a Bank pen, get your gas at Petron, earn a Ground Floorder or a Panasonic or Signature, call using a Sobio mobile phone and show those Lucky Me instant noodles...chances are, you are from the Philippines.

The giveaway? You prefer to travel by Philippine Airlines. These are some of the brands Filipino consumers said were according to the Reader's Digest SuperBrands 2004 Survey.

Looking for a computer? Take a cue from Filipinos...IBM is their choice. Epson also made it for the first time to the computer category. Both are now also Reader's Digest SuperBrands.

Filipinos keep cool with Coca-Cola, making its first entry to the air conditioner category. Aqua also makes it into the list of Filipinos' choice for drinking water, along with Wilkins, Absolute and Viva.

This year, the survey also included some service sectors to recognize outstanding service providers. In the Philippines, some of the new SuperBrands in these new categories are Philippine National Bank, Bank of the Philippine Islands and Metrobank (bank); Philippine American Life Insurance and College Assurance Plan Philippines (insurance); Philippine Long Distance Telecom (telecom company) and PedEx (airfreight courier service). In addition, there are three other new categories this year...rice, battery and sport/energy drink. Energizer (battery) and Red Bull (energy/sport drink) are some of the Reader's Digest SuperBrands in these new categories.

Panda Award: a first-time entry under the Pen category, joining Parker and Pilot as coveted pens in the Philippines. It O'Clock comes in as a Reader's Digest SuperBrand in the juice category together with Zesty.

"Get with" Alaska to voted a Reader's Digest SuperBrand under the milk category, alongside previous SuperBrands Anmum, Vida and Bear Brand.

Some things may never change—10 names have these great brands. Toyota, Shangri-La Hotel, Philippine Airlines, Nokia, Crown, Sony, Perfect, Nestlé, San Miguel, Avon and Asberon Shifter are some of the brands that have maintained strong presence and retained their SuperBrands status since 1999 when the survey first began.

"Reader's Digest SuperBrands is a survey of brands which are voted by Asian consumers—end users of the products and services in the survey. This survey truly reflects consumers' voice and choice in Asia," says Fiona Dy, Regional Research & ad Services Director, Reader's Digest Asia.

"We strongly believe that competition between brands to provide better value, service and quality is healthy as at the end of the day, it will benefit consumers," adds Fiona Dy.

PHILAMLIFE CEO Jose L. Cuisia accepts a SuperBrand Platinum award for the insurance firm.

The awarding ceremony of this year's SuperBrands was held recently at the Shangri-La Hotel, Makati. Like Century Tuna, Reader's Digest Sales Director for the Philippines, spearheaded the evening affair attended by Simon Chesterley, Reader's Digest Asia Regional Advertising Director, as well as, presidents and top officials of winning SuperBrands.

The Reader's Digest SuperBrands survey is a consumer survey in its 6th year. This year, Reader's Digest has partnered with Nielsen Media Research, world leader in international media research and analysis, to conduct a more comprehensive survey to determine which are the outstanding brands in Asia.

Apart from the brands singled out and voted by Reader's Digest's readers in the 6 markets surveyed—Malaysia, Singapore, Hong Kong, Taiwan, Thailand and the Philippines, the sampling base was expanded to include consumers in these six countries via telephone interviews. The total sample size is 1,000 consumers per market, totaling 6000 for the region.

Respondents from the six markets were asked to name their single preferred brand in 41 categories of products and services. They range from luxury goods to everyday necessities. The rated brands were rated quantitatively and qualitatively based on five determining factors: quality, value, trustworthiness, strong image and understanding of consumer needs.

LAND PACIFIC

Top condo project offers discounts

THE AFFAIR proved to be irresistible to both curiosity and financial tenderers.

Officials of Ayala Land Inc. and Hong Kong Land, developers of One Rotax Triangle recently hosted a dinner to climax. They preserved a 10 percent discount (added to an already existing 20 percent) on selected Manila Bay units, offered one night only. The other unit types—Bel-Air, Forbes and Legaspi—have previously been purchased, making One Rotax Triangle, almost 75 percent sold out, according to Ayala Land Sales Inc. general manager Dave Rafael. Construction for One Rotax began in 1996.

"One Rotax Triangle appeals to a luxury market. It's really high-end. The units are much bigger than other condominiums," Rafael adds that its location, along Paseo de Roxas and Makati Avenue, is a great one. It is within the Central Business District, only steps away from the "shopping and dining capital," and the city's most posh villages. "When you buy any kind of real estate—houses, condos, or townhouses—the most important factor is location, whether you're an end-user or an investor. One Rotax Triangle is advantageously located at the heart of Makati."

"Go to the lagoon swimming pool at 10 a.m. Those are the Makati CEO's peak hours. You won't hear anything; it's so peaceful and quiet. You're not in Makati, but you're in Makati. You have all the trees and open space, but you're in the middle of the city," he endorses.

Residents have also been a diverse gathering, from retired couples to expats. Rafael attributes this, apart from the previously mentioned reasons, to offers unique to the project: "Our payment terms make it very affordable to own a unit. We have a 5-year payment scheme, zero interest and ready for occupancy deal. You can't find a great deal like that anywhere else. If you're an investor, you'll buy a unit and get rent from tenants. The 5-year scheme allows a reduction in reservation fees. This is really the best value for money."

For further information on One Rotax Tri. single condominium units, please call 849-5888, log on to www.ayalaland.com.ph, or email ayala-sales@ayalaland.com.ph.

Dave Rafael, General Manager of Ayala Land Sales Inc. discusses the features of the One Rotax Triangle to prospective clients.

Sunday BIZ

Farmers must outgrow anti-WTO stance to succeed

By Vincent Cabreza
Business Inquirer Bureau

LA TRINIDAD, Benguet—The "discerning consumer" will decide the fate of the vegetable industry here and in most of Asia's highlands.

Agriculture experts said during the recently concluded National Vegetable Congress that consumers all over the world have learned to seek not only food, fiber, companions with exercise that would assure them of quality food would turn out the winners.

The vegetable industry has found, raised the headlines for two years now, spending out into tackling it—into an "insurmountable corruption and abusive free trade practices that explain its stagnation.

The Philippines produces some of the best exotic temperate vegetables in the global market but its "fragmented supply chains" keeps it with countries that have yet to devise an efficient trade system that will be acceptable to a global economy, said Hector Lojo, Asia Pacific sustainable agriculture manager of Syngenta.

Syngenta, a food consultancy firm, believes new "consumer segmentation" allows the vegetable industry to be "increasingly well educated, demanding, and more informed."

Low efficiency

These are also people who have grown concerned about food safety because "extensive media attention... has actively underscored public worldviews to the integrity of food production and supply," he said.

The rational chain aligns the vegetable-producing farms of the Philippines with Vietnam, China, Indonesia, Pakistan, Bangladesh and India, which are characterized by very low "food supply chain efficiency."

Lojo said this means that the vegetable retailers of these countries are too remote from crop production areas to influence after the market requires.

He said price drives domestic demand while kind of produce governs the markets.

Biz Malaysia, Thailand, Taiwan, Singapore and Hong Kong have managed to put up viable consumer-driven markets, although these economies still require "supply chain benchmarks," are under "large distributors' control," and remain "promotion topdowns," he said.

Farms here undergo "processed materials" or a combination of means of planting required by contract farming.

Most of these countries fail to match the standard already set by Japan, Korea, the United States, Britain and Australia, Syngenta said.

Vegetable farmers of the country have yet to grasp this new class ethic.

A GREEN grocer selling cabbages at La Trinidad, Benguet

Domestic market

Faustino Madut, Cordillera director of the Department of Agriculture, said vegetable farming remains a domestic market that is heavily tilt to native tastes.

The Cordillera remains the Philippines' largest source of salad vegetables but demand for the produce has dwindled because of competing imports and a disorganized marketing direction, Jose Abellon, president of the Benguet Federation of Farmers, said.

The Cordillera generates 660,209 metric tons of broccoli, cabbages, carrots, potatoes, bell peppers and greenery annually. These represent 94 percent of Metro Manila's salad vegetable supply.

Trailing Cordillera in the flower region, which produces 11,577 metric tons a year, both the Visayas and Mindanao generate semi-temperate vegetables that are consumed domestically.

But the inability to determine climatic needs has affected sales.

Madut said based on the sales movement chart in Lamut, the industry produced 1,787 more tons of broccoli last year but saw a deficit of 1,304 metric tons when the market demanded 2,691 metric tons.

The industry also produced 51,870 metric tons of carrots, only to see a surplus of 21,432 metric tons when the market only drolled out enough for 49,103 metric tons this year.

Farm subsidies

Farmers here have, in fact, denounced government corruption for the imports, which they blamed for the market fluctuations.

But Madut said farmers have not neglected internal problems such as low resources, bad infrastructure and poorly coordinated crop production.

He said he believed the critical response would be to increase basic subsidies to allow farmers more room to organize and assimilate better technology.

"A situation analysis of the social temperate vegetable industry reveals that the industry's strengths are in the quality of its vegetable production (and) a dynamic market for semi-temperate vegetables," Madut said.

But Syngenta is advocating for a full-blooded "tracing" system to the Philippines.

This is a mechanism that allows vegetable-producing industries to track down a particular product from where it was grown, how it was shipped, and where it was eventually sold.

Lojo said "traceability" is a "confidence assuring" mechanism required by a global economy. This mechanism allows countries to maintain integrity and develop a notable trading environment so it can export its semi-temperate vegetables and fruits, he said.

"Professionally managed food safety and quality programs and traceability is becoming a 'seller's market' for many Asia producers exporting to Japan, EU and the EU," he said.

But Thailand is on its way to promoting traceability and food safety programs, according to "Kitchen of the World" label on all Thai-grown vegetables and fruits, Lojo said. Thailand is upgrading its food handling and food production standards and has budgeted $7.88 million in promotion campaigns. This labels that will cover seven livestock initiatives, 27 crops and control chemicals that increase the red pigmentation in meat products.

Malaysia is also pursuing its so-called "8th agenda" that focuses on exporting food by the year 2010. Lojo said Malaysia had to deal with its failed trade history with Singapore due to its proximity to consumer and exports that its basin contained high cereal requirements.

Grads find firms that help them do community work

By Marivi D. Soliano

TWO Ateneo Young Leaders Congress alumni found avenues of combining their community work, which began in college even if they are now employed. In the case big names in the corporate industry. These companies also have the Ateneo CSR programs ranging from leadership seminars, scholarship grants, feeding programs, etc.

Jeffrey Tanyao, AYLC 2000 participant now works with Globe Telecom as the head of its corporate social responsibility programs.

Julie Hudsthan, AYLC 1999 alumnus is the assistant manager for human resources operations of Unilever Foods, the food division of Unilever Philippines, and used to be the project leader of its feeding programs.

Tanyao has a long history of community involvement. "I have always seen myself in advocacy and helping communities," he says.

He had joined immersion projects in orphanages at the Sena Bilibid Prisons, Silang Tanghalang and other barangays in Metro Manila. Aside from that, he was also part of the Ateneo Career Week Project in 1999. These are just very tiny portions of his participation in community work.

He consciously researched for companies that have a strong foundation in CSR when he was job hunting.

"Most of the companies I found involved in CSR are really big companies, so the basic consideration as compensation, job stability, etc., were given already," he says.

Although he didn't initially worked directly in this area, Tanyao slowly found his way to where his heart is. "The CSR philosophy and involvement was the absolute final non-negotiable thing to me."

Hudsthan, on the other hand, didn't have a full understanding of CSR until she attended the AYLC five years ago but she was actively participating in her school's outreach programs in college.

"Coming from the perspective of a student, I thought those efforts by companies were just part of their public relations strategy," Hudsthan says. "But after AYLC and when I joined Unilever, I had the glimpse of a corporate entity caring about marginalized sectors in the country."

Ash Ramirez (here she's just cards for what a three or what is being offered. They now have the option to choose fr the principles of the companies they are working for are attuned to their own. As Hudsthan says, "for some it's no longer just the size of the paycheck."

Tanyao looked at companies' social involvement in the communities where they do business.

"Even before I looked into details of their CSR projects, I have the perception already that specific CSR projects are attached to certain industries," he says. For example, he said the list that includes Ayala's Ayala Foundation, Globe's Globe Telecom Achievement Awards, Intel's Innovation in Education, Intel Share's Raya Ms Eid, and the like.

Tanyao graduated with honors from the University of the Philippines in 2001 with a degree in Communications Arts.

He feels that he has a strong commitment to help in these areas: leadership among youth, advancing education, and bridging ideas among communities. These are also the areas where Globe's programs are focused.

"In my personal capacity, I think I can contribute by bringing in the real communities the breakthroughs we try to come up in these fields of involvement," Tanyao says.

Richard Jones likewise believes that immersion ties to the country's community rising. Hudsthan believes that for those who have the opportunity to choose, it is all right to do so if being chosen means being able to fulfill an individual's social responsibility.

"In a big way, young people today are starting to realize that working is a life's choice," says Hudsthan, who graduated with honors in 2001 at the Ateneo de Manila University with a degree in business management.

Hudsthan is an active volunteer of Unilever's outreach projects particularly in feeding program called Pakaain (aptly because she's part of the company's food division.

The department human resources where she works used to be in charge of this project but when the company saw that this was not just a one-shot deal, it decided to create a dedicated team to handle various outreach programs.

GLOBE's corporate social responsibility program head, Jeffrey Tanyao (left) turns over medicine to military men in Puerto Galera.

Southerner makes a home in the Citi

WHEN many professionals from the provinces trade their careers by moving to Metro Manila's core of the major business hubs in Luzon, one lady executive has managed to move to the top by staying right at home...down south in Cebu.

In so doing, she has kept her family under and shown inspiration from working right in her hometown.

"I've always lived in Cebu. I've been asked to move to Manila before, but I've made it clear that this is where I'm good at, this is where my home and my family is. Whenever, I either a local to understand the needs of the local market," says Judith Uy-Go, a Chinese-Filipino with a soft voice. Judith is the head of the Citibank branch in Cebu. While other Citibank branches are scattered in different places around Metro Manila, here is the only one this far south—which means she also reaches out to customers in Iloilo, Bacolod, Davao and other parts of Visayas and Mindanao.

Difficult as it may sound, she loves the challenges that come with her job. "We're always faced with tough goals, so my team should be intense enough to set such and meet Citibanks know that Citibank is here for them."

One of her priorities lies in educating her customers on new wealth management concepts. Judith and her team of Citibank Relationship Managers have been helping clients learn to delve into mutual funds, to invest in real estate trust investments, to additions to traditional banking services such as savings and time deposits.

"We want to make people aware that they have more choices when it comes to investing their money. They cannot be so to find out how to maximize their money and it's very timely because of the low interest environment that we now have."

Judith's approach is customarily one-on-one, and here her background goes for an intimate assessment of the likes and dislikes of a Cebuano. "We listen to their needs. It's not just about getting the account, it's about meeting their properly.

JUDITH Uy-Go

We like to think of it as working together with the client to achieve our common goal, that is, maximizing their wealth," she explains.

It's a matter of principle to make every customer of a customer's investment yours, especially when majority of their clientele is Chinese. "They are quite conscious and you really need to explain the type of investments they're getting into. In previous years, it was a big challenge to introduce wealth management concepts, but they're now more open towards getting into more than just deposit accounts."

Judith also believes in sharing market knowledge. It's those who come to them for advice, even if they're not clients of Citibank—yet. "We're known a set of standards for explaining investment tools to them. And so along the way they begin to see that there's a difference and the kind of service and expertise we provide."

This capability to give extensive market information is one of Judith's sources of pride in her company. "Being global is one of our distinct advantages," she stated. "Our presence across the globe gives us the capability to access many markets and so we are able to give customers timely and relevant market updates in words that impact one's investments."

"We also spend a lot of money to research. So with Citibank, even if you're living in the south, you get the same global standard of service that you'd get in, say, Hong Kong or Singapore. We let you go beyond boundaries, beyond the limitations of certain situations."

It's quite understandable why Judith has opted to grow with Citibank for 19 years now. "I started out in sales and learn from the ranks to be where I am now, all because of my passion for my work. And this passion I share with my team. We're happy to bring a handful of managers. I lead by example. Before I ask them to do anything, I will first. If something's difficult to do, I'm still happy to be the source for them."

Judith's dedication, undoubtedly, breeds another foreign bank, but they don't have a sense of competition or conflict. "Our good thing is that we don't talk about business when we're at home. We understand the pressures that people have in their respective companies, that's all. And even though I work long hours, home is just 20 minutes away. I can have a good lunch with him, or I can be with my kids anytime. I'm very thankful that I have a husband that's understanding enough to let me work."

Judith seems rightfully torn between her duties in her personal and professional fields. "I'm glad to be with a company that creates an environment that brings out the best in everyone. It basically does a great deal in giving me the opportunities to maximize my strengths, in terms of education, self-discipline and commitment to excellence. I can now look back and say I've been able to maximize my career to the utmost and literally."

She looks to her own career philosophy: "In choosing where you have to work, you have to select one that motivates that you feel will make you do what you do best," she explained. "Don't waste time, because you only have one life to live." She may as well be giving the same advice to a potential investor, by the looks of it.

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PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

Sunday LIFESTYLE

Memories are made of these wedding gowns

Four top designers showcase creations that will make any wedding memorable

MANDY ONG

Story by Alice T. Vergara
Photos by Jon-Victor Pascaran

THE PENINSULA Manila beat organizers of Philippine Fashion Week by several days, staging recently its own fashion show that featured the bridal creations of four of the country's top designers.

Presented at the hotel's Signature Ballroom, "A Lifetime of Memories: Bridals in the Sky" featured the bridal creations of Ned Cabral, Randy Ortiz, Tippi Ocampo and R. Buendia.

The show went beyond bridal finery as the designers also showcased gowns and cocktail dresses for women wedding guests.

Ortiz and Buendia teamed to their own and included a couple of men's suits and tuxedos in the look. The former first made a name for himself in the business as a men's wear designer, while the latter himself is skilled designing women's clothes for several ready-to-wear brands.

The designers' respective trademarks were evident in their ensemble and intricately detailed pieces.

Ortiz, for instance, infused his soft pieces consisting of layered and semi-draped numbers with structured elements such as electric gloves and origami-folded fanciful and contrasting cabbage roses placed faintly at the back.

Burst of colors

Ortiz drew inspiration from "tropical romance," reflected in his gowns for the entourage: a burst of bright colors ranging from turquoise (aqua in the mainstream) to saffron (orange to you and me) that were ruched and layered.

An OOOF are biting, take note, and instead used sheets of chiffon to achieve volume.

The designers' columns were a tad too monochromatic. But, note their behind-the-scene skill-set, they were also minimalist yet timeless.

Ocampo was also in a romantic mood. The neo-classicist in her use of such materials as lace, chiffon, silk and various stretch fabrics. Her capes accented the seams of several gathered gowns.

Bridals Ortiz, however, Ocampo opted for muted shades like nude, olive gray and chaste pagan for that "teenage bourdoir" look.

It was her version, she said, of how a young woman would look like today had she slipped into her grandma's clothes. Something honeymoon need not look old and blue.

ADVANCED 12

PAUL Cabral

JC Buendia

TIPPI Ocampo

TIPPI Ocampo

JC Buendia

JC Buendia

Memories are made of these wedding gowns

TIPPI Ocampo

Ocampo, of course, left plenty of room for her clothes to fit the curvaceous figures of today's women. Like could you imagine your rela wearing a teeny-weeny halter or a strapless bustier?

But despite showing some skin, her pieces didn't look risqué. In fact, they exuded a lady-like flavor only a woman designer would probably dream up.

Less than frilly

Of the four designers, Buendia perhaps best expressed the sensibilities of today's career women with her casual, structured and less than-frilly gowns, peasants and contrasting separates.

Consigned to most pieces done by his colleagues, Buendia's black-and-white creations were crisp, precise and viscerally feminine.

Buendia was said to have been inspired by "The Bonnie Spring of Mrs. Stone," a small TV movie aired on the Hallmark Channel.

He updated the look, which harked back to the 1950s and 1960s, by infusing it with the signature style of the heroine of the moment: Carrie Bradshaw of "Sex and the City."

This explained, for instance, the presence of off-white tweed ensemble consisting of a fitted jacket and short pencil skirt.

For that laid-back, I-don't-give-a-hoot look many of today's young women love to project, he paired the white-circle skirt made of duppioni silk with contrasting embroidery with a black V-neck cotton tee.

He later reversed the color scheme: long sleeved white blouse paired with a black circle skirt, both made of satin, lace added drama and volume to the skirt as it peeked from under the hem.

Buendia also displayed his expertise in tailoring in creations of grey in a number of crisp pantsuits and men's formal wear.

His silhouettes were mostly straight or A-line except for his fabric a wedding gown made of charmeuse satin with a chalked allure. Its V-neckerville top with sweetgo floral appliqués left little to the imagination.

Show-stoppers

If minimalism isn't your cup of tea, then Cabral is the designer to go to. Unlike some designers, however, there's always method to his madness for understatement.

As expected, he presented a fitting finale with five show-stopping gowns that had monster sections all over them.

Cabral pulled almost every trick in his sewing box by combining accents like lace, seed pearls, hand-made sequins and Swarovski crystals either on the gowns' bodices or the sides of the skirts.

Except for his opening number, an all-shoulder-wedding gown, all his pieces were strapless and A-line.

Some of his skirts appeared wide and full but said there was a valid reason for this. "To showcase all those heavy details without sculpting, he had to use fabrics unnecessarily a couple of his skirts made of duchess satin to stiffen them."

Cabral's finale, easily the evening's best, seemed to have been inspired by the country's seasons.

The wedding guests, especially conservatively shy and bashful brought to mind an Inec bride, while the delicate and painstaking detailing, which included a watery, like ribbon motif of silk petals, had the hallmarks of a Jun Escalona.

For good measure, a long, semi-beaded train reminiscent of lush ferns that surrounded the bashful's headwork echoed the celebrated works of Ramon Valera.

With such a range of looks and flavors to choose from, would-be brides (and perhaps their grooms) and their women guests that night must have gotten a clearer idea of what to wear and where to go to for that one-of-a-kind attire.

E-mail the author at ourgirl@inquirer.com.ph

RANDY Ortiz

JC Buendia

RANDY Ortiz

PAUL Cabral

PAUL Cabral

PAUL Cabral

Sunday LIFESTYLE

Maybe it is not so much about a deathless identity as those impulses toward the good that we leave behind

Immortality

By Gilda Cordero-Fernando

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A WRITER colleague, Andres Cristobal Cruz, had died and many of his friends came to the wake. He had been ill for a very long time, reported Mario M, upset from the memory of so many tragic deaths in his family.

So depressed and sick was Andy that he refused to see anyone. The first time Mario went for a visit, he was denied audience, but then he went again and was able to get into Andy's room.

The sick man was alone in his dark room staring at the wall. They didn't exchange a word. Mario just silently massaged his friend's back for a long, long time until Andy fell asleep. The next time he heard, the writer was dead.

The mortuary had a necrological service for him. The keynote speaker, Adrian Cristobal, said Andy had achieved immortality because he had written so many poems to leave behind to posterity.

I wondered, as I have many times before, what immortality really means. Is it a book of 50 poems that you leave behind? Is it a novel or three novels? Is it a public office you occupy where you gave your all?

Andy had also written a number of short stories in Kinaray-a and two novels in Tagalog. Few people had read the later novel, not even National Artist Ike who was instrumental for its publication.

"But I did!" chirped Sol H, who was sitting further down on the pew. "And it was good."

Pete had read the novels as had Filipinos really read literary stuff in RP like the caricature immortality for the corpse before me?

The next day, I was at a surprise party for a young designer, given by her equally young friends. Across the table, a fellow guest, about 30 years old, asked me, "What do you do?"

"I write," I said.

"Do we publish any of them?" he asked.

I said, "Yes, some."

"What an embarrassment!" emitted Myrna, the Cosmo editor sitting in front of me.

The smart young fellow seemed to be genuinely interested in finding out what I was doing. He himself was into "cyberwriting" and considered what I considered to be interesting educational projects especially for experience. He had absolutely every right as the next fellow to know nothing about me since I was even more ignorant about his computers.

On my left was Ginger, bright eyed and all of 20. I'm sure she didn't have an inkling of what I was doing for anyone either, not even, except she was beside me.

Neither, I'm sure, did Kate nor Bertie, whom Ulster coached them before taking them to one of my parties. I was barely two generations away, still active in the field and already lost in almost the whole table.

Questions

I began to question Adrian's upbeat rose-tinted study's immortality.

What about names of illustrious people who have been honored by their philanthropic progeny with the scholarships and awards, a hundred one almost 20 years old? Didn't such generosity and love begot immortality?

Of course, it is entirely possible that such a gesture could be completely independent of immortality. Maybe it is just a human urge we attach to people who've done us some good.

The popular concept of immortality is that we are remembered. By our family, by the people we love, by people who've been touched by us. Shall life 50 years.

We have hard-set work to be remembered! With videos, photos, letters, diaries and other memorabilia we leave behind. A piece of land, an educational plan, some gold or close to use for the grandchild's wedding.

If we sit in, we paint, we act, we compose music, we dance, our names and our work will predictably fade away. We get old. Embittered. Or benumbed but.

Last New Year, while clearing the jungle of our lodge, I painstakingly spent my departed father's bundle of old writings. They were already fragile and browning. Periodically I have wanted to throw them away because for the last 50 years I had not really

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Why Ermita has 'bota flores' for its patroness

PURELY PERSONAL

Josephine Barcelo Gutierrez

ON THE FEAST of the Birthday Sobrea de Gozo in Ermita on May 19, the capitanes hosts the bota flores or tossing of flowers.

In the book "Pinakesan," Jaime Laya says, "This practice recalls the more than 100 years that the image was held aloft in the Manila Cathedral."

Alejandro Roces, in his book, writes that the parish church of Ermita collapsed in the earthquake of 1796. The Franciscan friars transferred the image to the cathedral, along with her yelo or dominion, reputedly equal to that of the Dominicans' Virgen del Rosario de La Naval and the Jesuits' Virgen de la Paz y Buenviaje.

The church was promptly rebuilt, but the image was not returned. In the people of Ermita started a tradition, whereby on Monday, fed by the anxious (reputedly the wife of the capitan or village chief), walked in a procession from Ermita Church to Quiapo in the corner of M.H. del Pilar and 12th Avenue), to the cathedral to reconsecrate. With great zest, young ladies tossed flowers before their angelon patroness, said to be loaded behind bars. The procession then resumed its route.

In 2000, the image was finally returned but a "ransom" was paid consisting of the Virgin's projectors, according to old Ermita residents.

Also in earlier times, for the procession, sensitive residents would drape their windows with mantels de Manila and cherry flowers as the image as it passed.

This year's hermano mayor Tony Adriano has asked his goddaughter Kitkat Perez Rueda to be the capitana. She is the grandaughter of Cristina Perez Rueda, who will escort the Virgin with Manila Archbishop Gaudencio Rosales and Doña Soledad Adriano.

St. Sarria de Gozo, parish priest and devotees of the Virgin, heads the celebration with his assistant, Fr. Tom Fatima.

Concelebrating the Mass are Bishop Max Cruz of Lallopezza, Bishop Bobby Bravo of Iloilo, Leyte, and Bishop Pastor Cortés, Capiz, with 30 priests including Msgr. Jerome Reyes and Fr. Boy Rondez.

St. Joseph joins procession

Upon the suggestion of the Capitanes, St. Joseph will join the procession and escort the lady on the 5 p.m. Santa Misa on May 19.

Most Tongues will bring the image out to serve as Reina Sobrina. Brother Juan. The Philippine Navy and Manila City Hall Bands will play in the procession.

Msgr. Jerome Reyes, who was parish priest of Ermita for eight years, says the intercession of the Reyesita Sobrea de Gozo is instantaneous and powerful. He says the Virgen has never turned down his requests. St. Sarria's mother, Maria de Cleto, always had a Mass at the church, so knowing her son would become its parish priest.

St. Michael Church

The newly renovated church and altar of St. Michael the Archangel Parish in Marikina, Rizal, were dedicated and consecrated by Bishop Antonio Tobias, auxiliary bishop of the archdiocese of Manila, on May 7, the day before the Feast of the saint on May 8. The consecration committee headed by Ogie Villamor raised P15 million for the church.

Prominent families in Marikina pledged to pay for the images of St. Michael, the restoration of the Blessed Virgin Mary and the Resurrected Christ made by Francisco Buzzi.

The main altar of nave with gold leaf was designed in the baroque-cuenco style by liturgical art designer Tony Adriano.

The Crucified Christ on the main altar was built more than 300 years ago and donated by the Montano-Baguena family through the Knights of Columbus.

Fr. Antonio Ramos, parish priest, said the construction was like the Bible story about a woman's pouring of perfume on the feet of Jesus.

When Judas said it would have been better to sell the alabaster phial of perfume and give the money to the poor, Jesus replied, "It is a lovely thing what she has done for Me. For the poor you will always have with you, but you will not have Me always."

Father Ramos was saying it was worth spending on for the house of God.

The construction committee was composed of Marcos "Ogie" Villamor, chair; Felino Ramos, co-chair; Larry Cruz and Olga Mendoza, secretaries; Demetria Custodio, treasurer; Roberto Hermoso and Purificacion de Guzman, auditors; and Melissa Talmacsi, Lisa Ray-Bautista, Raul Delfa, Lenny Bonifacio, Ramon Ay and Bonifacio San Luis, members.

Proudly Kapampangan

The 200 members and the Sto. Rita theater group led by director Andy Abiz, dramatic presented through song and dance, in honor of the Rita-color church in Pampanga, the beautiful culture and heritage of the Kapampangans.

Organized by the construction committee of St. Joseph Church in Cabalantian led by Dr. Salve Hufia and prominent surgeon Pilito Ofiña, the event drew well-known families in the province, including Gregorio Casanova, Ginoro Sicat and lawyer Bobbi Wicks Benevidez. Ping de Jesus, Fr. Hufia Subic parish priest, was also there.

Commemorative stamp

The Philippine Postal Corp. has issued commemorative stamps of the Virgen de los Remedios. Proceeds from the sales will help in the construction of a bigger church in Barrio Balat, San Fernando, Pampanga.

The commemorative stamps may be bought from post offices and the Balat church. Yesterday was the feast of Virgen de los Remedios. She is now wearing a new ensemble of pina designed by Oscar Martin de Jesus, OSB.

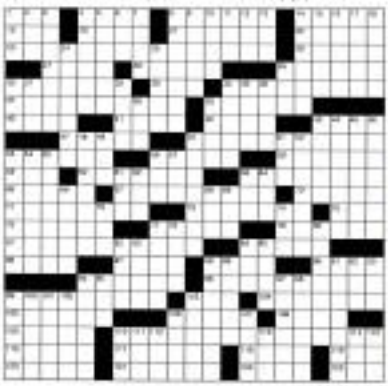
THE CONSTRUCTION committee of St. Michael Parish with Tourism Secretary Ronnie Puno, Marikina Mayor Bayani, Ogie Villamor (third from left, second row) and Tony Adriano (second from right, back row)

LITURGICAL art designer Tony Adriano and fundraiser Ogie Villamor

MARIA de Gloria, patroness of Ermita

SUNDAY CROSSWORD

PREMIER CROSSWORD/ By Dennis J. Bisnar — TREE PEOPLE



answer on page C2

Immortality

(From page C1)

gone over them and it didn't seem likely my children would.

Dan was the death of an article on his non-recycling adventure all over the rubble-heaps of Francis, Belgium, Italy and England, the first Prince in 1928 to have done so. An other was an unblended history of pewter (tapayan and ice inhabitants).

Among the clutter was also my mother's album with her high-school classmates' pictures, but who have I known. All the memorabilia were neatly pasted and annotated and they almost did not survive my generation!

I felt like abandoning the cleaning job I myself had begun of culling hundreds of family snapshots. Who, in the next generation of ours, were accepting would bother with them?

Whatever do we take with us when we go? Certainly not our diplomas, not our money, not our house and lot. Not even the body we have taken such care of with creams and rubs and perfumes and entrusted to the care of many doctors.

But the things we've invented or analyzed or written or composed or painted. Not our illustrious bank accounts, not our stocks and securities.

I suddenly remembered visiting an old man (not a writer) who had received many accolades in his long life. His awards and citations lined the shelves of his hunting lodge. Type ready, every copy, plaque and medal polished to dazzling perfection. But he was unhappy.

He said he was getting old and people were beginning to forget his accomplishments. He said he should just carry more final award. Did he really believe they were passport to heaven?

Media

What role do media play. Using in one's being remembered. Have I been having the attitude of immortality? If you're not known, if no one has heard of you, then who will claim you are immortal? For instance, well-publicized projects get a lot of corporate and private support—because they're praised in columns and gabbed about endlessly on TV.

But there are even more unglamorous projects doing virtually the same thing, but many more recipients, for a longer period of time, and for a fraction of the money! Does their obscurity make them less qualified for immortality? Does their value diminish because they did not get media support?

Maybe immortality has nothing to do with external recognition.

What about the real, real immortals, the masters and other greats who never got out of the limelight—Shakespeare, Da Vinci, Mozart, Newton, Einstein, Freud and little old Mother Teresa? Did ours find and Nancy?

What distinguishes them from you and me? They just have bigger and deeper wells to draw from.

It seems that in certain generations, specially loaded multifarious are tasked to come down to earth with a mission to make civilization grow—the sciences, the arts, all of culture. Surely they have no immunity of becoming tainted—the manner of immortality being thus it's not sought after.

Anyone, it seems, can have a share of perpetuity. With simply we've said or an act that inspired someone, that influenced that attitude or behavior of another person, who consciously or unconsciously by word or by deed, passes it on. Nothing is really lost.

Maybe immortality is not so much about a deathless identity as those impulses toward good that we leave behind.

It encourages art, it discovery a more equal way of life, its original style. A kindness. A lesson of touch.

It is for others to be inspired by, to pick up, to build on, modify, expand or detail, and pass on. Without necessarily knowing its source and not in their original shape, either, but morphing forever and ever.

Maybe the ever-flowing river of influences is the real immortality. And that's encouraging.

THE PRINCIPAL sponsors include hotelier ladies Pilina Rocha, Beatrix Cobiñas, Elvie Concordia and President Macapagal-Arroyo

GORGEOUS bridesmaids Lori Ligot-Roldan, Lisa Flores-Montanez and Zasmia Mara

THE BRIDE'S nieces, Jasmin Zapanta-Andrada (center), with cousins Pamara Wanner and Jessica Reyes

Wedding 'planner' organizes her own

COSMO Manila's latest beautiful couple, Justin and Judith Berenguer-Reta (née Zapanta)

CLOSE pals Cindy Revilla-Planas and Cerisse Olives-Cabrera

By Maurice Arcasio

BELLS rang and rose petals were thrown when one of the gorgeous Zapanta sisters and her Prince Charming were married in a magical wedding, poliorgetes.

The beautiful Judith Zapanta and *el* cinematic hunk Justin Berenguer-Reta, after seven years of courtship, it was time to move to the next logical step. He proposed on Christmas Day and she said, "Yes!"

The church was fortunately in San Antonio and the reception at the home site's favorite "stable," the Manila Polo Club, ranch.

For Judith, planning a wedding, even her own, was second nature. Being the owner of Starlande Flower Shop and having dealt with many brides-to-be, she knows exactly what she wanted and how to go about it. Red roses, candles and a black-and-white theme were what she was going to have.

But just days before they were both in shock panic, hip designer Raja Laurel emailed himself creating color and elegance for the bride and the entourage.

Maid-of-honor was the bride's sister Ivy (who will also be a bride in June). Bridesmaids were all Judith's high-school gang: Lori Ligot-Roldan, Lisa Flores-Montanez, Zasmia Mara and Nicole Yap.

For Judith's black-and-white-themed wedding, Raja created a dramatic off-shoulder gown in silk Mikado, with a black waist accent, lowered straight in front at the back like a bustier slit and embroidered with cherry blossom patterns beaded with Austrian crystals.

Judith and Justin saw through every detail of the wedding, even the choice of principal sponsors, to make it an affair to truly remember.

They were close friends of bride and relatives, headed by President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo, Pilina Rocha (who was celebrating her birthday that evening), Elsie Concordia, stylish Beatrix Cobiñas, Secretary Joey Lina, tycoon Piping Elizalde, Peping Cojuangco, Peping Gonzalez and business magnate Ramon Ang.

Judith's sisters close pal, talented fiancé Jim Ayers, helped with the eye-catching décor for the reception. Aaron beautifully draped 16,000 yards of white fabric all around the main lounge of the Polo Club.

On the cocktail and main tables were burgundy and white roses and trees with hanging votive candles in glass containers. Dozens of hurricane votives were arranged at the base of each tree. Light masters Jeff Cooke created a romantic mood with more than a thousand candles illuminating the ballroom.

"Oh, wow, what a romantic magical setting," exclaimed the bride with the first lady, Cecile Pascual.

The yummy wedding cake was made by the in-demand Maria Shearer, no less. Cleverly centered of a tier of scented candles that the Groom candles exchange.

The list of invitees included those friends of the groom, super gals led by best man Mike Herrera and the groom's brother Jose Berenguer-Reta.

Drinks flowed before, during and after dinner, and the Polo Club was singing with "Hello," "You are looking great" and "Who's the?"

Among the over 300 or so fun patronize that dazzled were Robert Cruz, Steve Hontiveros, the Elizalde brothers, the Araneta brothers and the Hagedorn brothers.

There were Judith's own gang, like Yvonne Camacho, Sandra Palanca-Go, Chantal Sotto, Angela Villanueva, Mike Hamed, Angelette Calero, Gia Gonzales, Chance and Miguel Calihan, Isabel Cacho, beautifully in love Karla Belgado and Leon Arasmo, and beautiful couples Mandy and Tony Monasterio, Tina and Lito Tayona, Aga Silvestre and Jenny Serrano, Christina and Mike Lopez...as well as super gals from way back, Dodo Nava and Jacquee Dupasquier.

The Zapanta family's close friends arrived in full force: Boy Arroyo, Amado Bagtasing and his cutie and chic wife Cherry Lee, brilliant columnist Teddy Benigno, society icon Ching Montinola, Paul and Melanie Aquino, celebrity couple Louie and Erlene Sison, Hans and Maria Beaumont, vivacious and adorable Panera Magsaysay.

Also there, of course, were Judith's gorgeous siblings, Jenny and Stephen Yap, Jeanne and Noel Andrada, Jason and Dina Zapanta, plus others just as gorgeous as all those already mentioned.

It must have been the endless flow of champagne, wine and hard liquor that kept the crowd rocking on the dance floor to the sound of Saul Cisneros, and made them not want to go home.

Now, do these lessons know how to have fun, or what? Well, if that isn't a fun wedding, then what is, darling?

Remember, poliorgetes, "Following in the steps of our Lord may not always be easy...but God promises to guide us every step of the way."

IT'S party time for (seated) Anna Tuason, Mia Legarda and Katrina Gonzalez, (standing) Jeri Berenguer-Reta, Anne Legarda, Mandy Monasterio, Tasha and Bong Gonzalez

GORGEOUS young couple Carlos and Melissa Elizalde (née Alcaide)

ELEGANT socialite Ching Montinola and mother of the bride Cherry Zapanta

Having dealt with many brides-to-be, Judith Zapanta knew exactly what she wanted and how to go about it

MAESTRA couturier Raja Laurel with Marissa Buencamino, Milan Buencamino, Gil Concepcion, Marie and Jim Fernandez, and Teresa Hernandez

SWINGING gang of the groom: Justin (far right) with Martin Garcia, Neil Legarda, Philip Hagedorn, Sunti Elizalde, Bryan Head and William Chaiger

SWAG OF BEAUTIES. The bride with Anne Tuason, Mia Legarda, Ann Arcasas, Jenny Serrano, Missy Carruthers, Tina Vazquez-Prado, Kat Abad, Marites Manosca, Cay Arasco and Gina Cleto

BUSINESS magnate Peping Cojuangco

MIKE Arcasas

Santacruzan benefits hearing-impaired

BEING. Emperor's Gene Ebdane and husband Dr. Tony Ebdane (right) with Queen Cebu president Jo Majoso, former Cebu City Mayor Ronald Duterte and Virginia Apostol of Cebu Daily News (PDI's sister paper)

CEBU CEBU
Jaime Piconell

THE QUOTA International of Cebu, in cooperation with the Cebu Visayas and Convention Bureau, successfully presented Santacruzan 2004. The annual event is a fund-raiser for various projects to benefit the hearing impaired.

Josephine Silvain Majoso, the current Queen Cebu president, explained, "Everything turned out fine. The Mass at the San Carlos Seminary was on time, and it didn't rain on the procession in the Sinulog Center City Hotel. Best of all, we reached our quota."

True. The 4 p.m. Mass on May 8, and the procession of pretty ladies and children beneath fresh-as-dividend arches drew applause from people that lined Juan Luna Avenue.

The dreams and progress as the grand Pacific ballroom was attended by prominent personalities. Visayas congress Dulce Jesusa Sotto seated beside Jose Maria, performed a well-applauded repertoire. The program opened with the "Our Father" and Hymnal. Sinibeng performed by a group of hearing-impaired girls who amazed everyone with their movements.

Source of blessings

Jo Majoso thanked everyone and pointed out how the Mayflim festival, a showcase of feminine prideshrade and elegance, had become a source of blessings for Queen Cebu to carry out its charitable projects.

The club is the only civic organization in Cebu dedicated to alleviating the plight of the hearing-impaired, particularly the indigent. It has donated a room to the Medical for the Deaf Center that is used for the early detection of deafness. It also provides for salaries of teachers for the deaf and facilitates job placement for the hearing-impaired in their socio-civil culture.

Queen materials two daycare centers in Cebu—in Sawang Calero, a depressed area, and Cogon, a seaside community. Cebu, in Cebuano, means broken down.

During the coronation pageant, the first to be called was petty Gillo Sabellano Garcia, Reina de los Angeles. She was chaired by her proud parents, Chris and Kathy Garcia, and sisters Amanda, Gabrielle and Laura. Also on hand was great-grandmama, Angelita Distiller.

Little beauties

The "queen's" angelic court included Danielle Vergara, Maryvin Ungel, Chiddeno Izquierdo, Alessandria Abesa, Lia Mayolo, Nicole Sia, Patricia Sedrigues, Dominique Cerezo, Jacqueline Cenco, Gemma Ungel, Angela Cheung and Beatrix Blume Cleva.

One is reminded that the Santacruzan commemorates the finding of the true cross of Jesus Christ in Jerusalem by St. Helena, mother of Rome's Emperor Constantine. She is a saint of the Catholic Church.

Constantine, on his way to battle, saw a vision of the cross and the words: "With this sign you shall conquer." After conquering his enemies, he converted to Christianity and made it the official religion of the Romans empire.

A key role in any Santacruzan is that of the Emperador Constantino, usually a pre-adolescent boy. This year, it was kindred Nicolo Sanchez. His court of princes had Renzo Sy, Dwight Lozada, Sherga Sy, Elvis Ishiarles, Leandro Lebrundard, Wayne Bartolo and Raphael Villegas.

This year's Reina de las Flores was Charle Mae Oropeza, attended by pretty sujetas—all with royal titles—Jessa Ann, Reina Fe, Alfaine Navarro, Reina Esperanza, Betty Shane Cleong, Reina Caridad, Reychelle Diano, Reina del Mar, Jamie Gaumercan, Reina de la Paz, Mel Angelie Baral, Reina de la Luna, and Reina Kyong, Reina de los Martires.

Reina Elena

Marichelle Cruz Gregorio reigned as the Reina Elena. Tall, young and pretty, the teen ancestral by her doubting husband, Patrick Gregorio, president of Rancheros Hotels and the Cebu Pension and Convention Bureau. Marichelle is a very successful agent for Philamlife in Vis and Mindo Tan's agency.

This year's Reina Emperatriz was one of the most acclaimed in years—Gene Godyo Ebdaniana, president of the Quota club of Mandaue City and wife of Dr. Hippocrates Ebdaniana, former ly of New York but now happily established in Cebu. She received her crown from her predecessor, Gregoria Caballeroy.

Credit for the success of Quota Santacruzan 2004 goes to all Quotarians, led by Jo Majoso and the other officers: Lourdes Parker, vice president external and overall chair; Corazon Cabeto, vice president internal who, with former prexy Tita Teppia, took charge of food and venue; secretaries Evelyn Bandoza and Ma. Cecilia Saborny; treasurers Christina Germentano (a former president) and Lourdes Mandigma; and auditors Marcia Sodbrad (a former prexy as well) and Pinky Sian.

Directors were in various committees, like Loretta Calderon, canvassing; Lourdes Garcia, spiritual affairs; Joly Gimotinea, coronation dinner; former president Sophia Maranan, physical arrangements; and Linda Banzon, finance.

As always, Lydia Butler, Quota Cebu's chosen president, had the task of searching for participants. She was ably assisted by Socorro Castilla, principal of Lycée's St. Benedict Childhood Education Center.

The rest of the members with varied assignments were: Mary Abad, Jo Almoguella, Juliet Chan, Constancia Bontuyan, Bobo Contreras, Sue Gray, Gasper Julia, Tita Manares, Josefina Pelki, Mavel Pinedo, Tomasa Rodriguez, Tomelin Saavedra, Mo. Cherie Singzo, Tita Tan, Cecile Uychay, Malou Yebon, Zenaida Yappero and Sylvia Yuseng.

The club has started to make plans for 2005.

SABRINA Garcia, Reina de los Angeles

BEING Elena Marichelle Gregorio with husband escort Pierre